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PRESS FOR MAIN MENU

Well, we finally did it. Went on-line. Grabbed a piece of the telecommunications revolution. Sold out to Prestel. Whatever you like. What this means is, we bought ourselves a slice of Micronet—not the first computer mag to do so; sure, and you bet we won't be the last. However, anybody out there—and there may be as many as 150,000 of you—who wants to get in touch, do so. Our mailbox is on the masthead.

Actually it wasn't that easy. Here's a snatch of the vital dialogue:

Editor: We want to go on Micronet.

Publisher: No chance.

Editor: This object in my hand is a baseball bat.

Publisher: Start next week OK?

Needless to say there's a lot of other nets we want to subscribe to. Compunet . . . BrotherNet . . . the list is endless. Wave of the future? Well, one of them, that's for sure. Pity about the word 'Modem', though. Ugly. No soul. Can anybody think of a better one? If you can, write — no, wait! Mailbox us. Save a tree!

Speaking of which, you've no doubt noticed a new branch to our logo with this issue. TV Gamer has joined forces with BIG K to further the cause of funware for the masses. Welcome indeed to all TV Gamer readers who are experiencing the BIG K style for the first time. Nice here, innit?

TONY TYLER

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Cover: Animal Magic by Robin Smith.





Be Ian McGregor—dodge the mines p. 74.

ANIMAL MAGIC: He's been called the greatest individual cult stylist in the UK. Also an Ungulant Obsessive. Page 34.





Design a game and win an Amstrad CPC 464.

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DISTRIBUTORS: Microdealer, Tiger Distribution and Centre Soft

At the start/finish line you strap on your helmet, check your instruments, gun your engine and surge onto the course.
Through the corners, up the hills, into the ruts and down the straights you manoeuvre for position and try to beat the clock.
Stay ahead if you can. But whatever you do, stay on course.
If you don't, one of two things will happen.
You'll slow down and lose valuable seconds getting back into the race. Or worse, you'll end up on the seat of your pants.
Who says computers don't like to get dirty?

Your agents risked their lives to find the enemy's secret headquarters.
Now you're risking yours to destroy it.
And they know you're coming.
Time's short, so you'll have to fly. But fly too fast, and you'll squander your precious fuel supply.
Needless to say, they don't issue parachutes on missions like this.
As you soar over hundreds of miles of distinctly unfriendly territory, the action is thick, fast and frighteningly three-dimensional.
Fighter aircraft. Surface-to-air missiles. Helicopter gunships.
The attacks come from every direction.
Even from behind.

Edison, the kinetic android, leads a frustrating life.
All he really wants to do is build his circuit boards and go with the flow. But things keep getting in the way.
Nohms — a negative influence — bug him regularly. They're harmless, but only from a distance.
Flash, the lightening bolt, disconnects everything in his path. Which can be frustrating after a hard day on the circuit.
And the cunning Killerwatt is out to fry poor Edison's brains.
But our hero simply solders on.
Juice! is the ultimate current event. You'll get a charge out of it. And a few jolts, too!

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EMS

JACK HITS THE MASSES

BIG JACK Tramiel, head honcho of the new-look Atari Corporation, blew into London one wet day in December. "I've just come to meet you guys", he growled at the huddled, dripping masses of the computer press assembled to see him. BIG K's man, more huddled and dripping than most, was there.

Big Jack fired his plans for Atari at his audience in a machine-gun style. "I'm gonna build a new line of computers for the masses". "I've invested $75m of my own money in this operation and we're looking to raise $150m by the summer of 85." "MSX? It's a very nice machine." "I don't compete with IBM, I build computers for the masses."

Those 'masses' will be seeing if Jack has put his money where his mouth is later this month at the giant Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas when four 'families' of Atari products will be revealed.

The first will be the video games division, still centered around the VCS. The new 7800 system (see BIG K No.5)has been scrapped.

Family 2 will be a line of 8-bit machines comprising 48K, 64K, 128K, music and portable machines. The 800XL survives with new styling and all software for the 8-bit line will be compatible with it.

A new 16-bit micro featuring the 68000 processor and high-grade graphics comes in presumably to challenge Apple's highly successful Macintosh. It will have a new operating system developed by Atari and Digital Research and will also contain GEM, DR's 'Macalike'WIMP (Windows Icons Menus Pointers) system.

Top of the family tree will be a line of 32-bit 'Workstations' for professional users featuring CAD CAM capabilities.

Atarisoft will continue to convert software for other micros and will also be used as an outlet for peripherals. Video game ROMs will comprise about 10% of the market in 1985.

Big Jack had a few kind words for the country he was visiting. "The U.K. is one of the strongest countries of development software," he said. Atari would be looking for a lot more support from outside in the software area.

Tramiel blew out of town leaving the huddled masses in no more doubt that 1985 will see Atari heavily on the offensive, eager to restore its tarnished name and image. BIG K's man, still dripping on the luxury shag-pile of the conference hotel, was made of sterner stuff, however. "We'll see," he said knowingly.



"EUREKA" CRIES THE WORLD

EUREKA! the multi-part acade/adventure opus with the 25,000 quid in readies prize, is set to become a worldwide hit. Already the game, written by adventure craftsman Ian Livingstone and programmed by Hungarian software house Andromeda, has been converted into French and German editions. *Eureka!* publishers Domark have already got deals lined up with the U.S.A., Canada, New Zealand and South Africa. Even Hungary is in line for its own edition.

50,000 copies ofv the game have sold in Britain alone, 11,000 have gone to France and a further 50,000 will be shipped to America next month. The French edition has been converted for the Oric (through Domark have no plans to market an Oric edition here) and contains some changes to the game—the French have put up a seperate 250,000F prize to the first person to solve the mystery of *Eureka!* Otherwise, the rest of the world are competing for the same £25,000 which, unless claimed by December 31st this year, will be shared out amongst those who came closest.

Domark has already been besieged by pleas for help. One man even claimed his son's interest in history has been reawakened by the game and his schoolwork improved dramatically.

As for what will follow *Eureka!*, Domark would say little other than they had a "biggie" lined up for this summer.



Embarrassed computer journalists—caught in the process of learning—refuse to show their features.

REALLY, WE DO OUR BEST, HONEST . . .

YAMAHA CLAIMED that their new computer/synthesiser is such an advanced concept that everyone should go on one of their training courses before they can use it.

That includes journalists – we're not getting any review machines until we seek enlightenment.

This much we know . . . . the new machine, the CX5ME, is an MSX machine coupled with a music synthesiser, a MIDI interface for connection to other musical instruments, and a separate music keyboard. It's only a 32K machine, but in addition to the regular GI chip specified by MSX, it contains a more advanced model used in the DX9 range of synthesisers. It all sounds a bit costly at around £600, but you do get a lot for your greenbacks.

As for the education of journalists . . . Gosbar Skank, editor of the best-selling magazine *A Small Rodent's Guide to East European Sewers*, comments, 'With my extensive ongoing extended lunch-break commitment I just don't have the time for this sort of thing. Besides, I know everything about computers – aren't they those people in suits who turn up for work regularly?'.

Seriously, considering that the trend in computing is towards systems that can be understood with a minimum of documentation, such as the amazing Apple Macintosh, isn't it a bit backward-looking to expect people virtually to earn a diploma before they can get started?

BOOTS IN MSX BLUNDER

OXFORD STREET wasn't the only road in London to be lit-up by bright lights this Christmas. Had you wandered down Fleet Street you might have noticed the bright red glow of embarrassed faces. Somehow the price of the Toshiba MSX micro featured in the Boots advertisement which appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Guardian* had been cut by a hefty £100.

Fleet Street's Gremlins beat Spielberg's by a couple of days, altering the cost of the Japanese micro from the standard £279 to an attractive £179. At that price even the most dubious hackers might be tempted to dip a hardbitten toe in the MSX waters.

Disappointed customers were being told by Boots staff that it is a mistake, and that they were sorry but the £279 price tag stays. Maybe they would feel happier if they were told that Boots' advertising department was queuing up for a mass ritual suicide.

HACK IN LUCKY DIP DRAMA

THE MUSIC BIZ made a pounce on the software biz just before Christmas. Ariolasoft, stepdaughter of Arista Records, set new standards for pizazz when it invited 16 million thirsty hacks to a majestic launch thrash in London's West End. Ariolasoft are majoring on US buy-ins — heading their debut list is the CBM version of *Lode Runner;* they also present such other American classics as *Murder on the Zinderneuf, M.U.L.E., Spelunker, Realm of Impossibility* and the venerable *Choplifter!,* all initially on CBM 64, though conversions will follow shortly.

To celebrate their arrival in the snakepit, Ariolasoft organised a prize draw. And guess what? First prize — a CBM S-64 luggable — went to the Oliver Hardy lookalike in the picture, none other than BIG K Ass. Ed. Richard Burton. (That's him second from right, eyes a-glitter with lust.)

BIG K: "Frankly, I'm over the moon with regard to this one. How much do you reckon I could get for it?"



LAST GASP FOR THE VIDEO ROM?

WITH THE news that both Parker and Coleco are pulling out of the dedicated video game cartridge biz in this country, the party looks to be all but over for the video game freak. The computer is king. Those antique-looking consoles with their gaping ROM slots are just a thing of the past. Only Atari remains to support its ageing VCS system.

A spokesman for Parker Video told BIG K that the decision to withdraw from the British market was taken in the U.S. where the parent company is based. Parker wee, ". . . All ready to go" with a line of computer conversions of their top-selling titles when the plug was pulled. Earlier last year the company had announced a lone of ROMs for Sinclair's ZX Interface II (see Big K No.2) but these never saw the light of day.

However, three of Parker's most recent releases for the Atari 2600 VCS will be available in Britain through a special arrangement with the Sidcup-based Silica Shop. *Frogger 2 Three Deep, Star Wars — The Arcade Game* and *Gyruss* can all be obtained through Silica, who purchased the entire consignment of the new games. Marketing Manager John Arundel told BIG K that the exclusive distribution deal meant that the games could be sold for £12.95 each, as opposed to the £34.95 price tag that Parker put on all previous releases.

In addition to the Parker trio, Silica have added *Pooyan, Strategy X* and *Marine Wars* to their range of over 200 VCS ROMs. The latter three came from Gakken and retail at £9.95 for Pooyan and £6.95 for the other two. Silica Shop can be contacted on 01-309 1111.

BBC UNDERWATER SERVICE

The world of computing can now claim the biggest wally shake-down since the April Fool's Day broadcast about Italian spaghetti trees, or H.G. Well's radio play *War of the Worlds.*

Answering what he believed to be a spoof "error message" query on his *Micro User* problem page, Mike Cook quipped "Take your computer immediately back to the dealer as this error message indicates that it is about to explode".

Some readers did not see the joke. Dealers certainly didn't. In the weeks that followed hundreds of BBCs were flung onto shop counters up and down the country, whilst once proud owners beat hasty retreats, pale-faced and sweating. And the strange thing was that they all had their fingers wedged firmly into their ears.

Finally the dealers twigged the score, when one customer stayed long enough to explain — a customer holding a large pail of water containing an Acorn BBC Model 'B' computer. Some people will believe anything they read . . .

INTERCEPTOR TAKE ON THE MIDDLEMEN

HEARD ABOUT a great new game but couldn't find it on sale anywhere? Before you curse the software house involved, stop and think. Chances are you're a victim of one of the many distributors around — those faceless middlemen that actually control what reaches the shelves in your friendly neighbourhood software store. At least that's how Interceptor Software, amongst many other companies, see the situation, they are constantly frustrated by being elbowed out of the way by the 'bigger guys' of the games industry.

To counter this and get their games out to a wider audience Interceptor have launched their own software club. Members receive new titles automatically each month and, if they buy, get another game from Interceptor's range absolutely free. There are also newsletters, posters, stickers and other special offers. Started in September, the club had over 10,000 members by Christmas.

Interceptor told Big K that their mail order sales had gone up dramatically in recent months, a response, they claimed, that was a direct result of punters being unable to find a wide selection of games through the major retail outlets. Unless distribution is improved, they told us, many small companies will face a bleak 1985.

In an unrelated incident, Interceptor is helping all those Commodore hackers who are having problems loading turbo-assisted programs due to bad tape head alignment. The Azimuth Head Alignment Tape costs £7.99 and comes complete ith a manual and screwdriver. The user loads the program and uses the on-screen instructions to adjust the tape head position of the cassette unit with the screwdriver (sounds like a recipe for chaos to us).

If you want to find out more about this or the software club, Interceptor can be contacted at Lindon House, The Green, Tadley, Hants.

WHEN THE WRITS HIT THE FAN . . .

ATARI ARE going in for the kill on plagiarism of their games. The first company to tremble under the threat of the judge's hammer are MRM Software. Atari observed that MRM's game *Castle of Gems* bore quite a lot more than a passing resemblence to their own *Crystal Castles.* Atari claim to have lost "substantial sales" in the past due to copyright infringements. And holding exclusive rights to classic games such as *Donkey Kong, Pac-Man, Defender* and *Pole Position,* who can blame them?

Does their latest move presage the amassing of the Atari White Army across the vast game-snaffling wastelands, under the leadership of new General Schlemiel?

"Yes" say Atari's P.R. "This is just one of the changes we're seeing under the new philosophy." Atari wouldn't disclose their exact line of fire — but our guess is that many are the ears that are burning, and many are the unsaleable copies that soon will be.

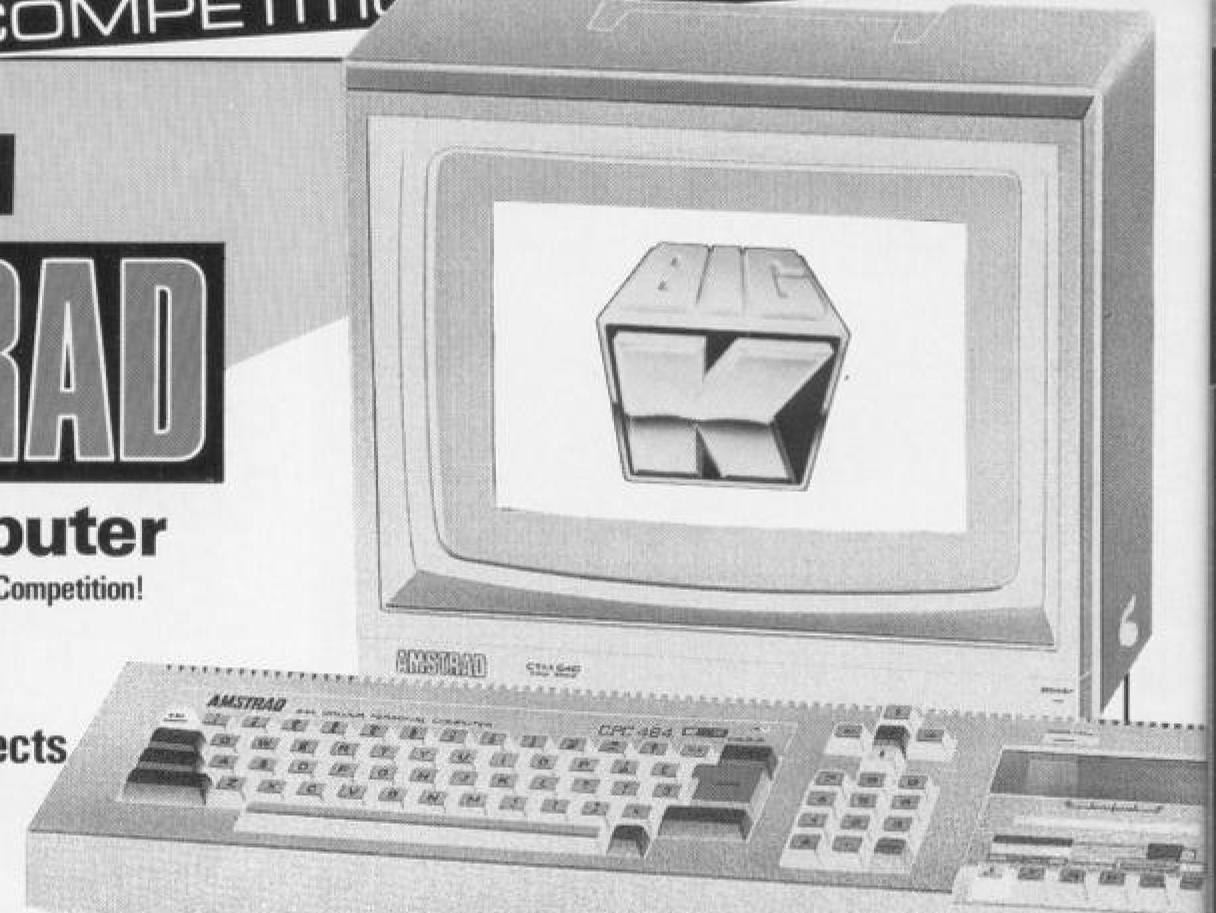
The writs ae also down for Ocean — for whom Elite have shown no mercy — only stunning alacrity in binding Ocean with restraining legal chains immediately upon the release of *Airwolf*.

Elite have the official licence to create a computer game based on the TV series, *The Hit,* following their success with *The Fall Guy* conversion. This town wasn't big enough for the two of 'em . . . and while one of them leaves, series two of *The Hit* is due to be broadcast next month.

COMPETITION • COMPETITION • COMPETITION • COMPETITION • C

WIN AN AMSTRAD CPC464 Computer

in our super BIG K/Software Projects Competition!



5 Runners-up win the complete Software Projects Catalogue for Amstrad and Spectrum!

HOW MANY times have you bought an arcade game, loaded and played it and thought "Great! . . . but if only I could do this or that to make it better." Or perhaps got frustrated because the third screen was 'impossible' and you'll never see the other 47?

SOFTWARE PROJECTS have produced the player's dream, a great all-action arcade game . . . which YOU can change. Bored with having only five lives? Okay, have more. Don't like the order of screens? Alter them.

You move around screens using ladders and drilling through barriers to collect treasurers. Meanwhile you're being chased. Can you succeed where others fail and move on to the next screen? Can you get on to the hi-score table? Play it and see.

The game is LODERUNNER and is available for the Spectrum 48K at £9.95. We have only mentioned a few of the features. Read on and find out more! And just look what you could win if you enter our simple competition!

HOW TO ENTER

We have listed eight features of the fantastic new game by Software Projects, 'Loderunner'.

What we want you to do for this competition is place them in the order you consider they would most appeal to a computer user seeking value for money.

Write the key letters of the eight factors — in ink — in the spaces on the entry coupon. For example, if you think that "Joystick/keyboard option" would be the most appealing of them all then put 'B' in the first space. The letter of your next choice goes in the second space, and so on for all eight.

Complete the coupon with your name and address and don't forget to fill in the second coupon if you wish to know more about Software Projects products. Post your completed entry to: BIG K LODERUNNER COMPETITION, LONDON, SE99 6YP, to arrive by the closing date which is Thursday 28th February, 1984.

HOW DO YOU RATE THESE?

A. 150 screens — a mammoth task with plenty of variety.
B. Joystick/Keyboard option.
C. Homing chasers — keeps the pressure on.
D. Highly addictive — tear yourself away if you can!
E. Redesign each screen as you wish — unlimited challenge.
J. Screen progression option if you're stuck.
K. Drill your own escape route — try different ways.
L. All user-design changes can be saved to tape.

ENTRY COUPON

BIG K LODERUNNER COMPETITION

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

In entering this competition, I agree to abide by the rules and to accept the published result as final and legally binding.

Name .... Age ....

Address ....

....

My computer is ....

DO NOT DETACH

I am interested in knowing more about Software Projects products.

Name ....

Address ....

....

My computer is ....

PLEASE CUT NEATLY AROUND THIS LINE

RULES

There is no entry fee but all entries must be on an entry coupon cut from BIG K and must bear the entrant's own name, age and address.

Every accepted entry will be examined and the First Prize awarded to the entrant who, in the opinion of the judges, has shown the most skill and judgement in placing the listed factors in the order of appeal to a home computer user seeking value for money. Remaining prizes will be awarded for the next best entries on order of merit. No entrant may win more than one award.

In the event of a tie or ties for any prize(s) then a further test of skill will be conducted by post between tying competitors to determine the eventual winner(s) or winning order.

All prizes must be accepted as offered. There can be no alternative awards, cash or otherwise. If the winner is aged under 18 then parental consent must be provided before the prize can be awarded.

Any entry received after the closing date will be disqualified as will any received mutilated, illegible, altered, incomplete or not complying with the rules and instructions exactly. No responsibility can be accepted for entries lost or delayed on the post or elsewhere.

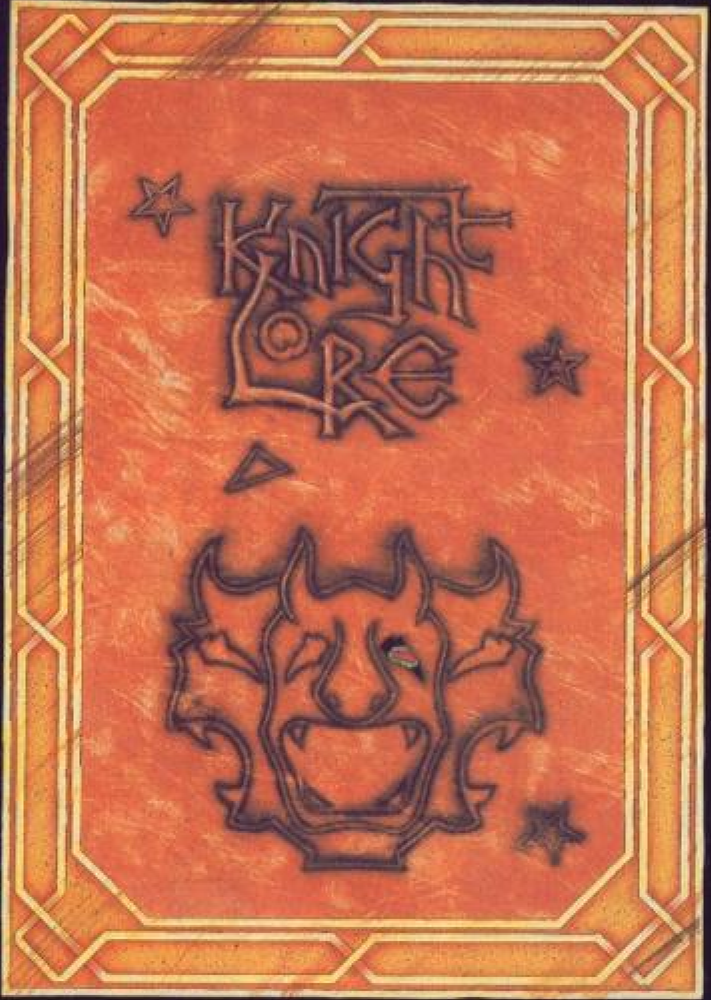
The judges' decision and that of the Editor in all other matters affecting the competition will be final and legally binding. No correspondence can be entered into.

The competition is open to all readers in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Eire, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man except employees (and their families) of IPC Magazines Ltd, the printers of BIG K or of Software Projects.

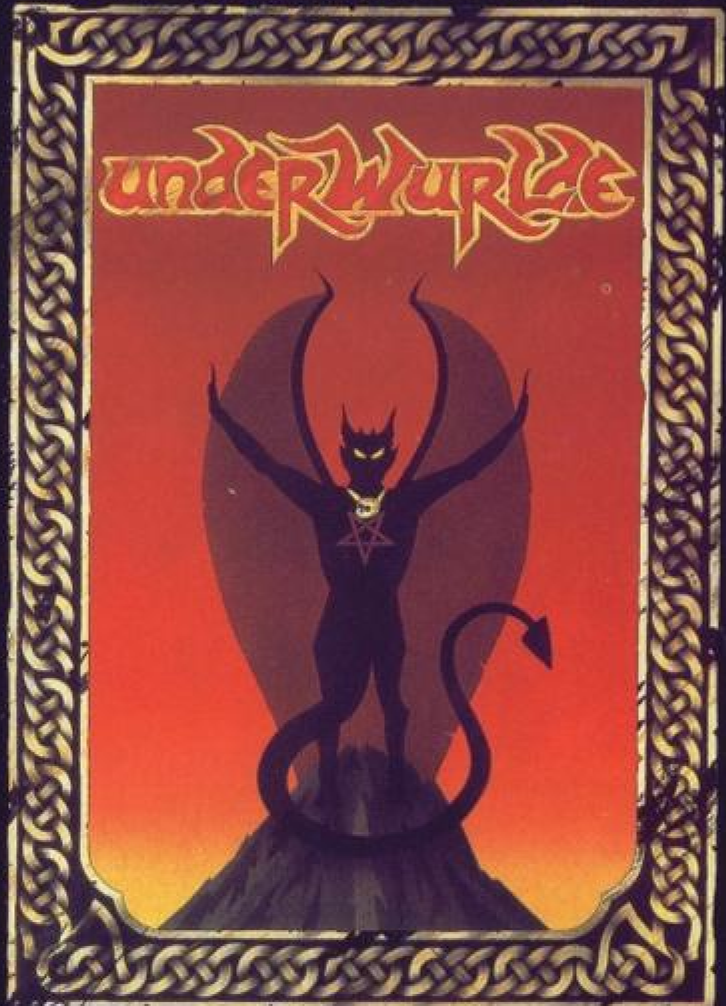
All winners will be notified and the result published later in BIG K.

ULTIMATE
PLAY THE GAME

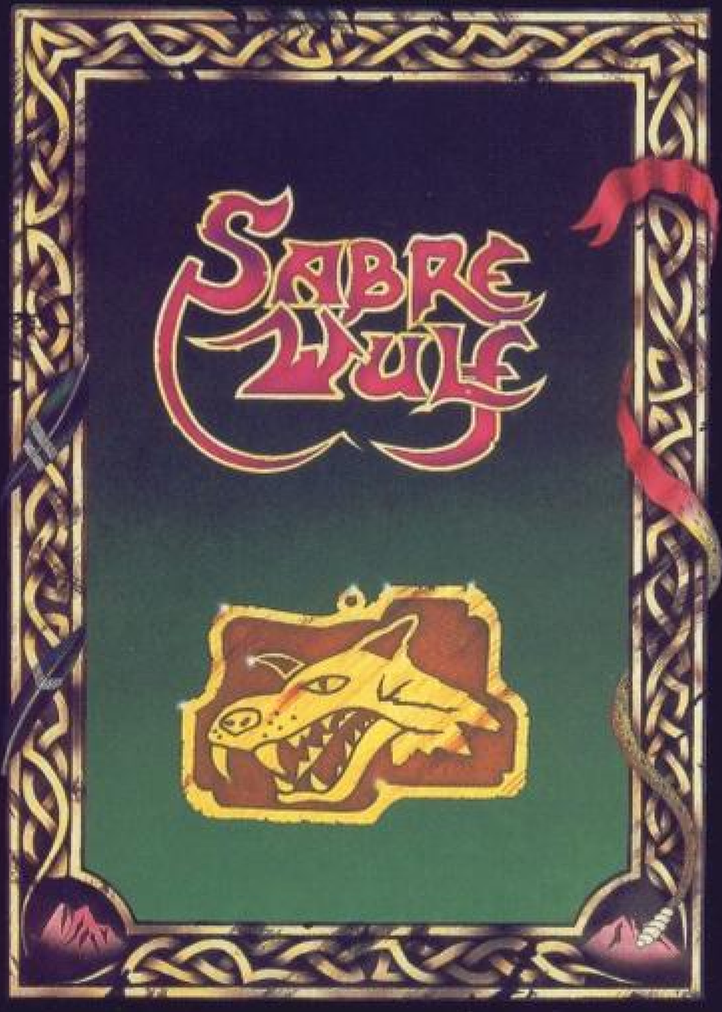
48K SINCLAIR ZX SPECTRUM



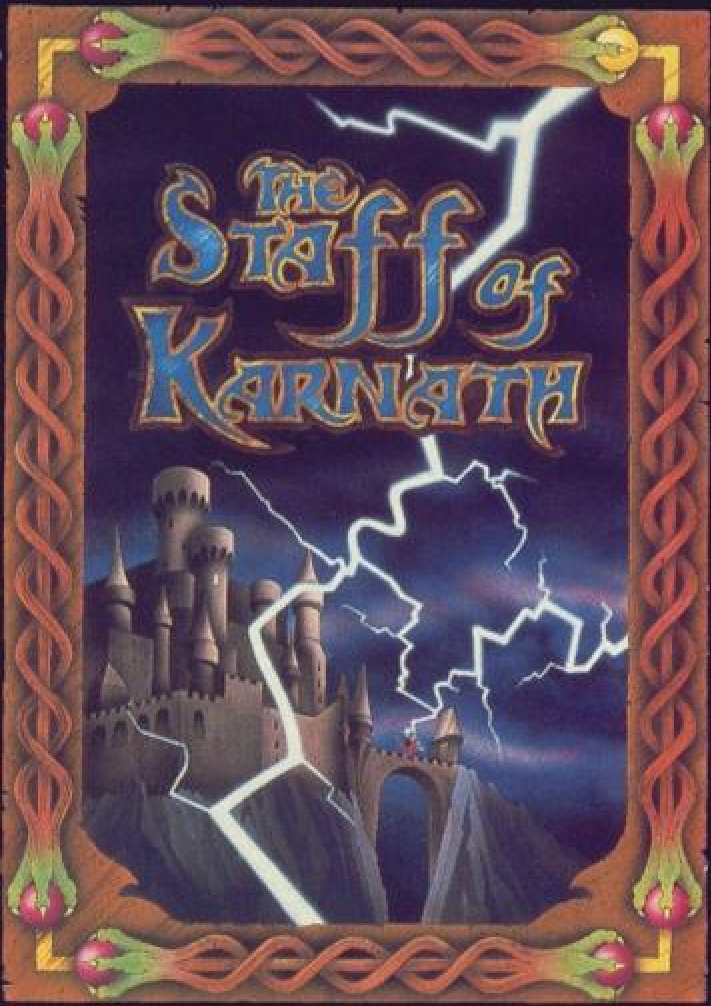
48K SINCLAIR ZX SPECTRUM



BBC MODEL B 1·2 OS
48K SINCLAIR ZX SPECTRUM



COMMODORE 64



"KNIGHTLORE", "UNDERWURLDE", "SABRE WULF", and "STAFF OF KARNATH" recommended retail price £9.95 inc VAT. Available from W.H.SMITH, BOOTS, J.MENZIES, WOOLWORTHS and all good software retail outlets. Also available from ULTIMATE PLAY THE GAME, The Green, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire LE6 5JU (P&P are included) Tel: 0530 411485


ULTIMATE
PLAY THE GAME

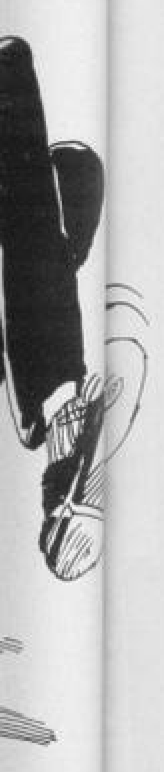
S·H·A·F·T

HOW TO BE TOPP... at Software reviewing. In a searing expose, FIN FAHEY blows the gaff on BIG K's secret reviewing techniques.



```
   5 GO TO 200
  10 REM *********************
  20 REM Simulated Hacking
  25 REM Allowing Fast
  30 REM Turnover Electronic
  40 REM  Reviews (SHAFTER)
  60 REM    by Fin Fahey
  70 REM *********************
  80 REM
  90 REM  s/r to truncate string
s
 100 LET n=2
 110 IF x$(n TO n)=" " THEN GO T
O 130
 120 LET n=n+1: GO TO 110
 130 LET x$=x$(1 TO n-1)
 140 RETURN
 197 REM
 198 REM  Start of Program
 199 REM
 200 GO SUB 2000: REM Initialise
 210 GO SUB 300: REM Names
 220 GO SUB 400: REM   Ratings
 230 GO SUB 600: REM  Do review
 240 PRINT "Another review(Y/N)?
"
 250 LET x$=INKEY$: IF x$="" THE
N GO TO 250
 260 IF x$="Y" OR x$="y" THEN GO
 TO 210
 270 IF x$="n" OR x$="N" THEN ST
OP
 280 GO TO 250
 297 REM
 298 REM  Game name + maker
 299 REM
 300 LET x=1+INT (RND*ns): LET x
$=s$(x): GO SUB 100: LET n$=x$
 305 LET a$=x$
 310 LET x=1+INT (RND*nt): LET x
$=t$(x): GO SUB 100: LET n$=n$+"
 "+x$
 313 LET x=1+INT (RND*ns): LET x
$=s$(x): GO SUB 100: LET o$=x$
 315 LET x=1+INT (RND*nt): LET x
$=t$(x): GO SUB 100: LET o$=o$+"
 "+x$
 320 LET x=1+INT (RND*nb): LET x
$=b$(x): GO SUB 100: LET h$=x$
 330 LET x=1+INT (RND*nc): LET x
$=c$(x): GO SUB 100: LET h$=h$+x
$
 335 LET x=1+INT (RND*nm): LET g
$=m$(x)
 340 CLS
 350 PRINT n$
 360 PRINT g$
 390 RETURN
 397 REM
 398 REM     Get ratings
 399 REM
 400 LET gr=INT (RND*3)+1
 410 IF gr>1 AND INT (RND*m)>2 T
HEN GO TO 400
 420 IF gr<3 AND INT (RND*m)<3 T
HEN GO TO 400
 430 LET pr=INT (RND*3)+1
 440 IF pr>1 AND INT (RND*m)>2 T
HEN GO TO 430
 450 IF pr<3 AND INT (RND*m)<3 T
HEN GO TO 430
 460 LET ar=INT (RND*3)+1
 470 IF ar>1 AND INT (RND*m)>2 T
HEN GO TO 460
 480 IF ar<3 AND INT (RND*m)<3 T
HEN GO TO 460
 490 LET or=INT ((gr+pr+ar)/3)
 500 PRINT "Overall: ";k$(1 TO o
r): PRINT
 510 RETURN
 597 REM
 598 REM  Do review
 599 REM
 600 GO TO 610+or*20
 630 IF RND*2<1 THEN PRINT h$;"
continue to promote standards of
 boredom and incompetence second
 to none, having set a precedent
 with the appalling ";o$;".": GO
 TO 700
 640 PRINT "Judging from this la
me offering, ";h$;" are a no-hop
er outfit who with any luck will
 shortly slide into an unmourned
 oblivion.": GO TO 700
 650 IF RND*2<1 THEN PRINT h$;"
have certainly improved since re
leasing the abysmal ";o$;".": GO
 TO 700
 660 PRINT "Adequately competent
 version of the classic ";o$;"."
: GO TO 700
 670 IF RND*2<1 THEN PRINT "Mind
-blowingly brilliant reworking o
f the immortal arcade classic ";
o$;".": GO TO 700
 680 PRINT h$;" seem dedicated t
o maintaining the incredibly hig
h standard established with thei
r smash-hit classic ";o$;"."
 700 GO TO 700+(4-gr)*20
 720 IF RND*2>1 THEN PRINT "Neve
r in all my years of experience
as an ill-paid hack have I seen
graphics implemented with such f
lair and brilliance.": GO TO 800
 730 PRINT "On the strength of t
he graphics alone, this game is
on a par with the Mona Lisa, the
 Sistine Chapel, and Kubrick's 2
001.": GO TO 800
 740 IF RND*2>1 THEN PRINT "The
graphics are convincing if unspe
ctacular.": GO TO 800
 750 PRINT "Graphics are not the
 games strongest point, but they
're O.K. if you like that kind o
f thing.": GO TO 800
 760 IF RND*2>1 THEN PRINT "The
creators of this game deserve th
e electric chair simply on the s
trength of the graphics alone.":
 GO TO 800
 770 PRINT "Visually this game i
s about as appealing as teenage
acne.": GO TO 800
 800 GO TO 800+pr*20
 820 IF RND*2>1 THEN PRINT "So d
isjointed is the game action, it
 is clear that the authors are s
uffering from severe organic bra
in damage.": GO TO 900
```

I · E · R ·



Doubtless, you have been frequently awe-stricken by the sparkling wit and stiletto-sharp accuracy of our reviewers down here at BIG K. By special permission of our noble and gracious editor, I am empowered to inform you that our output is now almost entirely automated.

After all, reviewers have lots of better things to do, rather than go through vast heaps of luridly illustrated cassettes trying to sift a few jewels from the dross. Just imagine a combination of lumberjack, astronaut and psychoanalyst. That's the sort of person who would be ideally suited to the task. We so far haven't found anyone to fill the bill, so rather than waste vital gum-chewing time, we rely on SHAFTER! (Simulated Hacking Allowing Fast Throughput of Electronic Reviews).

This masterpiece of software engineering runs on the Spectrum 48K super-computer. It is a fully flexible system, and output can be 'mood-tailored' according to the user's wishes. We recently installed version 2 (listed here), which contains the ultimate in user-friendly, labour-saving features. We don't even have to look up all those tiresome game titles and software house names any more, since the system constructs them for itself.

We're sure that you lot out there have never noticed the difference. But just in case you do go and ask for *Toad Cruncher* by Psychoyawn at your local retailer, they're more than likely to tell you that it's out of stock, rather than admit ignorance. A case of the emperor's new clothes. The object of the exercise, is to knock out entertaining and plausible-sounding prose, and this is what SHAFTER! does really well. Type it in and you'll see that being a reviewer is simplicity itself. You may even want to start your own magazine as a result. Should you do this, please take great care not to muscle in on our pitch as we do a very nice line in cement overshoes, and our office is very conveniently situated for the river...

```
 830 PRINT "Playing this is like
 having your brains extracted vi
a your left nostril with a dirty
 teaspoon.": GO TO 900
 840 IF RND*2>1 THEN PRINT "Once
 you've had the rules translated
 from the original pidgin Serbo-
Croat, the game proves to be pas
sably playable.": GO TO 900
 850 PRINT "Game playing standar
ds are not about to set the worl
d on fire, but it's quite adequa
te for a rainy afternoon.": GO T
O 900
 860 IF RND*2>1 THEN PRINT "The
game action is so involving, so
exquisitely balanced, that one i
s convinced that this game is th
e creation of superior minds, po
ssibly god-like in their capabil
ities, but certainly representin
g the next step in human evoluti
on.": GO TO 900
 870 PRINT "Fantastically varied
 play scenarios. Although even a
 child of three could master the
 game rules, the action is consi
stently challenging.": GO TO 900
 900 GO TO 900+ar*20
 920 IF RND*2>1 THEN PRINT "It's
 also about as addictive as shar
ing a prison cell with a psychot
ic axe murderer.": GO TO 1000
 930 PRINT "I would rather be ca
ught selling home-brewed beer in
 Iran than play this game once m
ore.": GO TO 1000
 940 IF RND*2>1 THEN PRINT "Plea
sant enough to fill a few idle h
ours, particularly for under-fiv
es.": GO TO 1000
 950 PRINT "The game does have a
 certain odd fascination which k
ept me playing it, although I do
n't know if I'd want to load it
up again.": GO TO 1000
 960 IF RND*2>1 THEN PRINT "So a
ddictive is ";n$;" that I am now
 having to attend a special clin
ic and after six months of inten
sive therapy, have cut my playin
g hours down to ten a day.": GO
TO 1000
 970 PRINT "It is completely imp
ossible to stop playing this gam
e. I'd very much like to, since
I haven't even eaten in three da
ys. Will someone out there send
help...please."
1000 GO TO 1000+or*20
1020 IF RND*2>1 THEN PRINT "I co
nsider the very existence of ";n
$;" as definitive proof that the
re is no God.": GO TO 1100
1030 PRINT "People who have the
nerve to even contemplate market
ing dross like this should at th
e least be locked away for a ver
y long time.": GO TO 1100
1040 IF RND*2>1 THEN PRINT "All
in all, a workmanlike, if unorig
inal effort.": GO TO 1100
1050 PRINT "This shows promise,
so let's hope that ";h$;" get th
eir act together in future.": GO
 TO 1100
1060 IF RND*2>1 THEN PRINT "I ca
nnot imagine any pleasure compar
able with even three seconds spe
nt playing ";n$;".": GO TO 1100
1070 PRINT "It will be nothing s
hort of a national tragedy if ev
eryone in the UK is not immediat
ely compelled to play this game
- at gun-point if necessary."
1100 PRINT
1110 PRINT "From: ";h$
1120 PRINT "Format: Cassette"
1130 LET co=INT (RND*200): IF co
<100 THEN GO TO 1130
1140 LET co=co/20
1150 PRINT "Price: ";co
1160 PRINT "Graphics: ";k$(1 TO
gr)
1170 PRINT "Addictiveness: ";k$(
1 TO ar)
1180 PRINT "Playability: ";k$(1
TO pr)
1900 RETURN
1997 REM
1998 REM    Initialise
1999 REM
2000 DIM s$(30,20): DIM t$(30,20
)
2010 DIM b$(30,20): DIM c$(30,20
): DIM m$(30,30)
2015 LET k$="KKK"
2020 LET n=0
2030 LET n=n+1: READ x$: IF x$="
****" THEN GO TO 2050
2040 LET s$(n)=x$: GO TO 2030
2050 LET ns=n-1: LET n=0
2060 LET n=n+1: READ x$: IF x$="
****" THEN GO TO 2080
2070 LET t$(n)=x$: GO TO 2060
2080 LET nt=n-1: LET n=0
2090 LET n=n+1: READ x$: IF x$="
****" THEN GO TO 2110
2100 LET b$(n)=x$: GO TO 2090
2110 LET nb=n-1: LET n=0
2120 LET n=n+1: READ x$: IF x$="
****" THEN GO TO 2140
2130 LET c$(n)=x$: GO TO 2120
2140 LET nc=n-1: LET n=0
2143 LET n=n+1: READ x$: IF x$="
****" THEN GO TO 2147
2145 LET m$(n)=x$: GO TO 2143
2147 LET nm=n-1: CLS
2150 PRINT : PRINT "   Select Cu
rrent Mood"
2160 PRINT : PRINT "1.  Brain da
mage/Bribery"
2170 PRINT : PRINT "2.  It's Pay
-day"
2180 PRINT : PRINT "3.  Just bac
k from pub"
2190 PRINT : PRINT "4.  Tranked
up"
2200 PRINT : PRINT "5.  Monday m
orning"
2210 PRINT : PRINT "6.  Hungover
"

2220 PRINT : PRINT "7.  Recently
 deceased": PRINT "     spouse/pa
rent/budgerigar"
2230 LET x$=INKEY$: IF x$="" THE
N GO TO 2230
2240 LET n=VAL x$: IF n=0 OR n>7
 THEN GO TO 2230
2250 LET m=n
2900 RETURN
2997 REM
2998 REM   Data Statements
2999 REM
3000 DATA "Alien","Toad","Blob",
"Galaxy","Zombie","Robot"
3010 DATA "Android","Atomic","In
vader","Hamster"
3050 DATA "****"
3100 DATA "Attack","Force","Ambu
sh","Megazap","Quest","Encounter
"

3110 DATA "Patrol","Adventure","
Wars","Buster","Cruncher"
3150 DATA "****"
3200 DATA "Mega","Micro","Psycho
","Zappo","Naff","Nova"
3210 DATA "Inter","Shark","Rippe
r","Crook","Bent"
3250 DATA "****"
3300 DATA "soft","tronic"," Soft
ware","fun","games"," Projects"
3310 DATA " Rip-offs"," Projects
","death","yawn","ware","deal"
3350 DATA "****"
3400 DATA "Nascom 1","Jupiter Ac
e","Mattel Aquarius"
3410 DATA "ICL 1904E","Cray II",
"Tandy TRS-80"
3420 DATA "Unexpanded ZX80","ENI
AC","Babbage Analytic Engine"
3450 DATA "****"
```

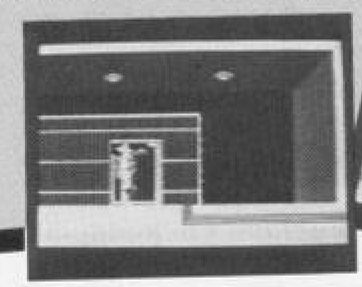
The FERRET

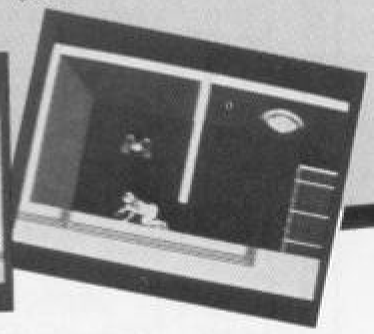
Tony Takoushi



IT APPEARS that someone out there shares my observation (from the last issue of Big K) over Uncle Clive hiring the Imagine hierarchy to do *Bandersnatch* on the QL.

I hear that Clive received a parcel of Imagine games (including such classics as *Frantic/Pedro 64* and *Schizoids*) with a note saying something along the lines of 'You hired the authors of these games to do your conversion!'





AFTER THE recent announcement by Rocksoft that they had various music copyrights and they were enforcing them against software houses (Mastertronic's *Chiller* being a prime example), I wondered who Rocksoft are:

Could they be part of The Performing Rights Society? Or The Mechanical Copyright Protection Society — both of whom represent various music interests? No, to my suprise, I found that the backing force of Rocksoft is none other than the Spectrum Group. It would appear to me that they are buying music copyrights and charging software houses (amongst others?) for use in their games. Why is one of the biggest forces in UK computer distribution taking a fee from many companies they supply to and distribute for?

Let me put it another way. Who says you can't have it both ways!

Thank heaven for little girls? Two girls, to be precise. Heather Lamont (ex-Rabbit) and Bruce Everiss's (ex-Imagine) wife have joined forces in a company called Softsource which will distribute software to retailers.

As for Bruce he's now a leading force in Tansoft. He is said to be on a salary of 30k with a Mercedes company car and credit card.

THERE'S EAGER and there's eager. But Ocean is a little too keen these days. Ocean were so sure they would get the contract for Airwolf *(from the hit TV series) that they had full colour ads designed and printed in the computer press saying they had the licence and the game was available. Now I know for a fact that Elite Software (Steve Wilcox and Co) have definitely got the contract from MCA (the Merchandising Corp of America).*

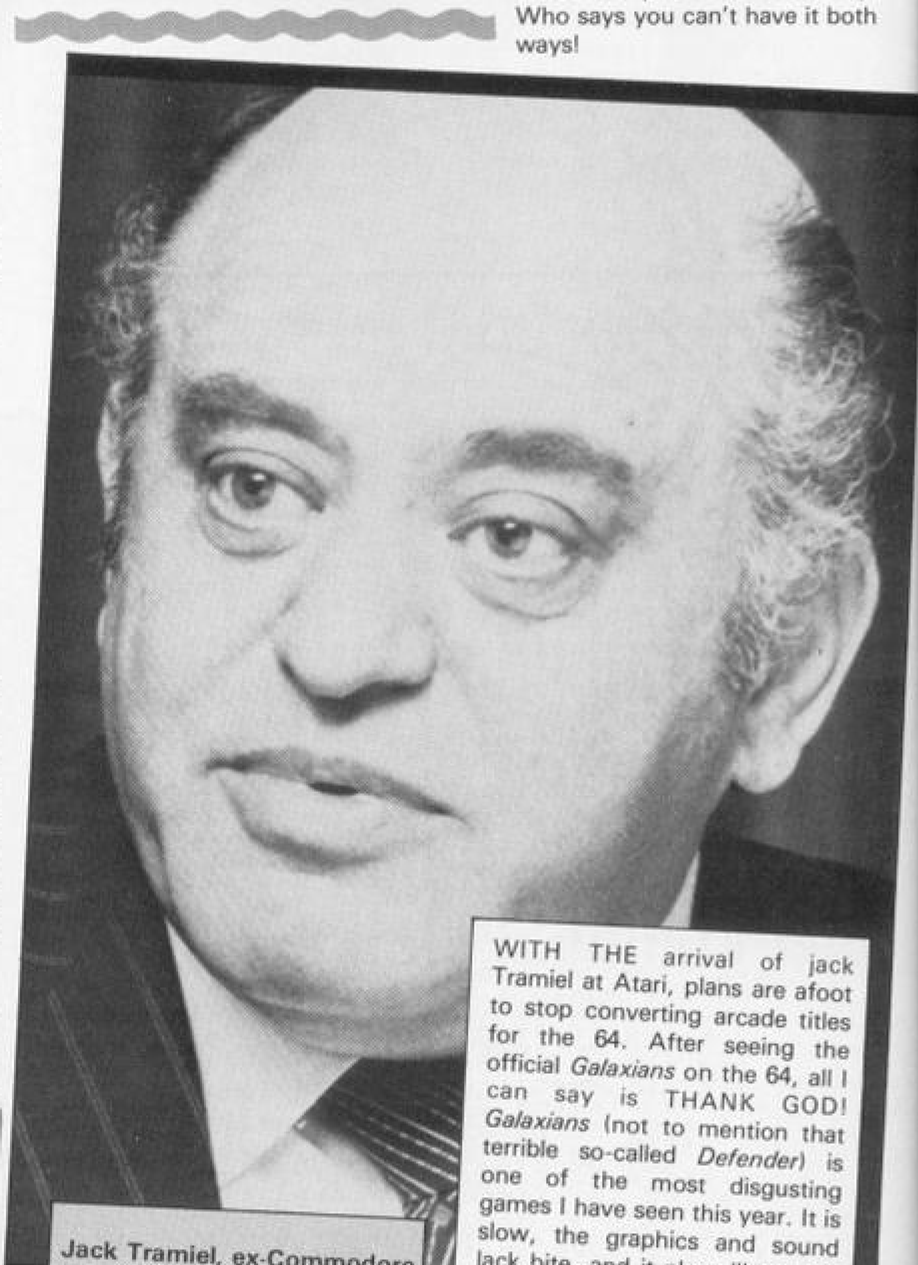
P.S. Stop Press: Elite are suing Ocean along the lines mentioned above!

I relish the prospect of the launch of the Stratos from Oric. It is said to have a special video controller chip with very high resolution and 16 colours, 64K RAM, multi-directional scrolling, 2 ROM sockets and 3½" disc drives.

OCEAN HAVE hired two mega-game programmes, John Gibson and Ian Weatherburn, from Denton Design to do some freelance work for them — but, of more interest, they are said to be producing a game that could be released under the newly acquired Imagine logo.

MARK BUTLER will soon be back in the software industry. He will be launching a new company called Rebel City early 1985.

ALL YOU budding Spectrum software houses will be happy to hear that a conversion ROM is rumoured to have been released in the US. It will allow bog-standard UK Spectrum games to run on the US Timex 2000. Could this give the Spectrum a new lease of life?.

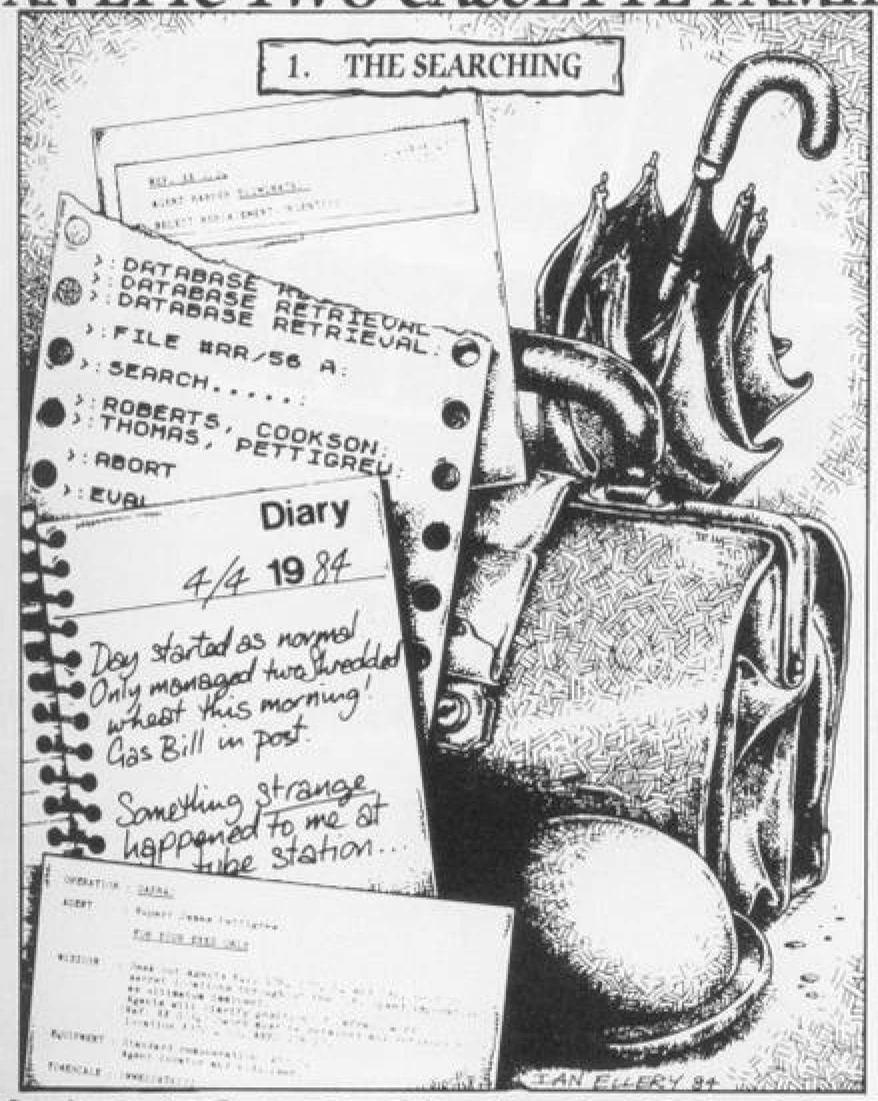


Jack Tramiel, ex-Commodore boss, now heading the revtalised Atari Corp.

WITH THE arrival of jack Tramiel at Atari, plans are afoot to stop converting arcade titles for the 64. After seeing the official *Galaxians* on the 64, all I can say is THANK GOD! *Galaxians* (not to mention that terrible so-called *Defender*) is one of the most disgusting games I have seen this year. It is slow, the graphics and sound lack bite, and it plays like a real dodo. Steer well clear of this one; it's a strong contender for Worst Game of the Year.

SHARDS SOFTWARE PRESENTS

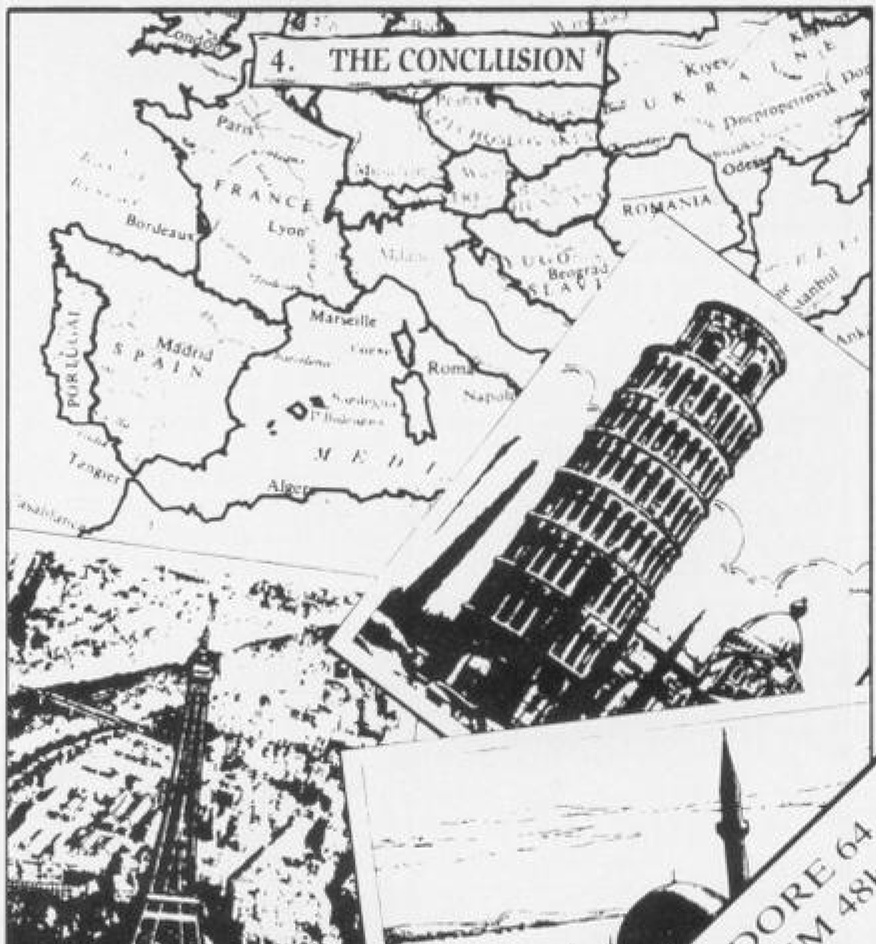
AN EPIC TWO CASSETTE FAMILY ADVENTURE IN FOUR PARTS





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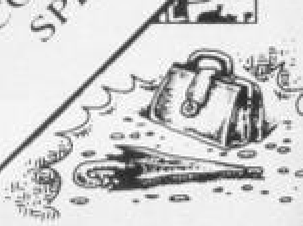




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Ramalama! It's Mama Llama!

Camel Ye Faithful and knuckle down to a session of JEFF MINTER'S newest smasherooni—and a continuation of the Ungulant Saga. TONY TAKOUSHI reports . . .

JEFF MINTER's pilgrimage to Peru last October was the inspiration for his latest game called *Mama Llama*. It features a (surprise)!) mother Llama and her two babies, all of whom are being attacked, in the best Minter tradition, by aliens.

The game follows the Minter style of a good shoot'em up but uses smooth scrolling backdrops to good effect. The scrolling backdrops are a first in that they are very colourful (unlike Tony Crowther who sticks firmly to four background colours).

The overall aim is to survive and protect the baby llamas, who mimic their mothers every action so as she leaps and spits at the aliens so do they! You have many sectors to patrol, with scanners within each section to help you locate any approaching nasties.

Following on from *Sheep in Space* and *Ancipital*, Minter has further evolved his gravity routines to allow incredible permutations on the alien attack patterns and on the movement of the llama. If you manage to clear a sector a warp gate will open to another sector, but you can choose to stay where you are a little longer.

Other sectors include the Inca City, Egyptian City, Space City, Rock City and Inca Homeworld — the gravity and viciousnes of the aliens being suitable altered for each.

One of the most outstanding features of Minter games is his increasing ability to make the gam feel good to play. When you pick up the joystick it feels' true. Real gamers will know what I mean (the rest of you will just have to work at it!).

At the time of review the game was only half complete and had to be reviewed as such due to print deadlines but even semi-complete its quality stood out and I look forward to seeing the finished item.

Rescue From Fractalus could be the finest 3D game in existence—that is said hand on heart. *Behind Jaggi Lines* (as it is otherwise called) was written by an Atari/Lucasfilm team who based it on the film *Return of the Jedi*.



MOTHER

You are placed in a cockpit looking out of your mothership preparing for launch. Press the fire button and the screen explodes into a crescendo of colour (honest!) as you zoom out through a launch tunnel and descend to the planet on a rescue mission for standard pilots.

As you fly around the planet your instruments show where the stranded pilots are and you have to get within three lengths of them before you cut out your engines to land and rescue them. After you land you must switch off your boosters and wait for the pilot to run toward your ship from his wrecked craft.

As he nears you open the airlock (a beautiful soft hiss of air this) and wait for him to bang on the hull of your ship as he clambers in. You then fire the boosters, pull the ship's nose up and fly around to rescue the other pilots.

Life is not exactly easy as there are enemy posts positioned around the mountain tops firing on you — and the pilots you try to rescue *could* be aliens who trundle up to your ship and smash your viewing screen.

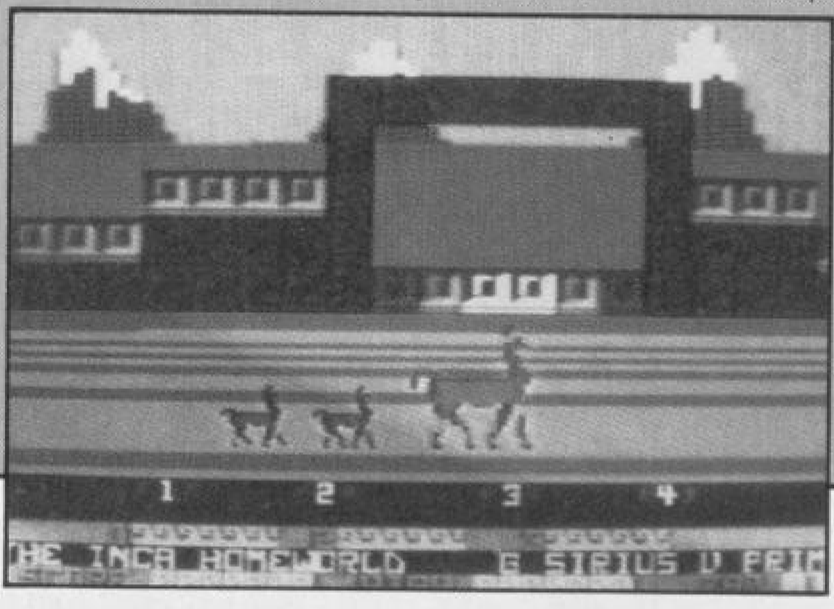
I cannot really begin to do this game justice in a written review as it has to be experienced to be believed. The way your craft swoops into valleys and climbs up the sides of mountains and drops down over them gives an incredible feeling of exhilaration. There is a game called *Encounter* on the market from Novagen (a *Battlezone* clone) that offers very fast 3D graphics, but this Atari game humbles it.

MASQUERADE

Rescue from Fractalus has 99 levels to choose from, with anything from three to 33 pilots to rescue, accurate and fast enemy laser posts and ever-increasing aliens masquerading as pilots.

It is officially available in the US now and Atari plan to release it in the UK, although no firm date is available at present.

I can think of no better reason to go out and buy an Atari than to play this game, and I promise you won't be disappointed.



Howling Through The Rooms

Gun loaded with silver bullets firmly to hand, FIN FAHEY stalks the chambers of Ultimate's latest mega-epic KNIGHT LORE with the Sabreman. He finds a game that won't be cracked easily . . . or so he thinks.

There's no rest for Sabreman. Having emerged triumphant from his encounter with the fabled *Sabre Wulf*, he must now conquer the animal side of his own nature, for he has now become a werewolf. The only person who can help is the renowned wizard Melkhior, who unfortunately is a tetchy old geezer. To ensure that he isn't disturbed by idle callers, the wizened savant has surrounded himself with deadly traps and barriers of all sorts. Me, I'd just take the phone off the hook, but you know how wizards are.

So, in time-honoured arcade-adventure style, you have to get throug them, collecting all the components of a potion which will free your soul from the dread curse of lycanthropy.

What makes *Knight Lore* such a joy to play, though, is the sheer style of the animation and room graphics. Ultimate eschew the use of screens full of bright clashing primary colours to concentrate on the details, and in doing so demonstrate that games can be highly playable and tasteful simultanously.

The rooms of Melkhior's castle are displayed in three-D from a oblique viewpoint, which makes a change from the usual cross-section or plan layout. The objects also have a solid sort of feel. If there's a pile of blocks in the room you can walk out of sight behind it, for example. It's very reminiscent of Quicksilva's 'Softsolid' games. Unlike the latter, however, *Knight Lore* is beautifully animated. Even when your character hasn't been ordered to do anything, he's still on the move, peering around the room in a bemused fashion, or when in his wolf form, occasionally snarling quietly to himself.



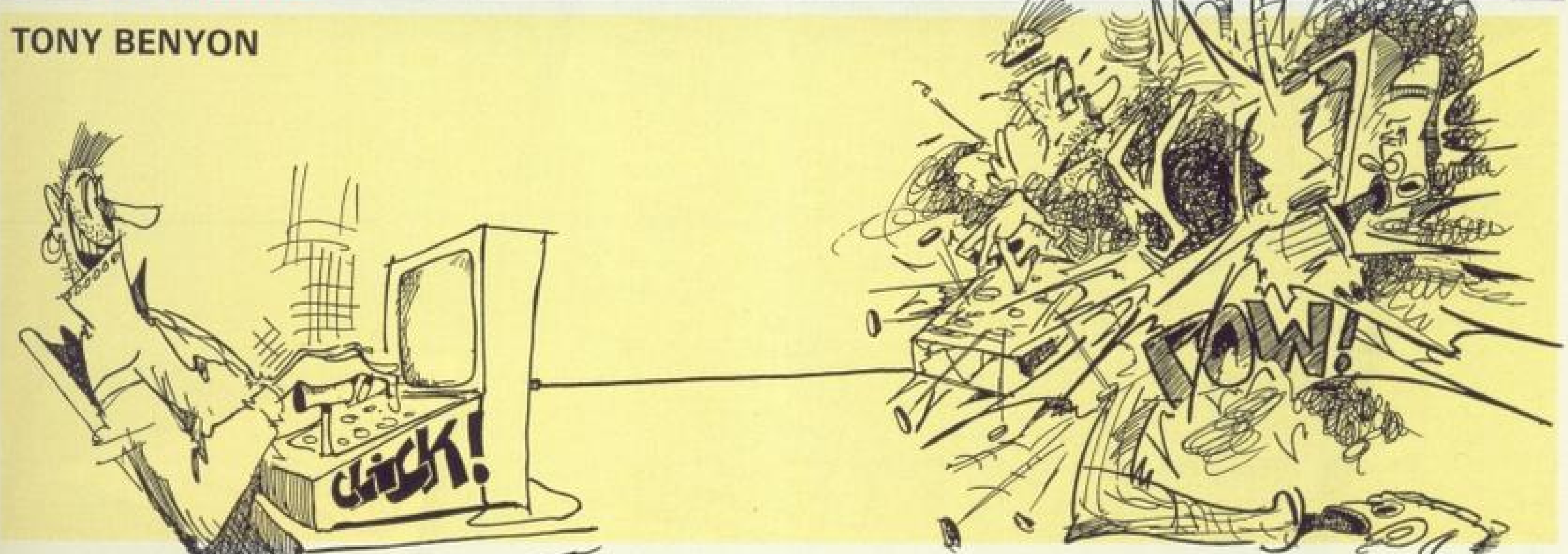
A little moving indicator at the bottom of the screen shows you the position of the sun and moon, and when the moon rises Sableman goes through his metamorphosis into an animal. This can be very disconcerting if you're just in the middle of negotiating an obstacle. The wolf form seems to be able to jump slightly further than the man, which can come in useful.

The traps are of many forms, from patrolling dwarf guards to simple problems of jumping from ledge to ledge. You may have to move the furniture around to get to objects you want. I don't think that we're going to get a rash of maps for *Knight Lore*, because the castle plan is different every time you play, although the relationship of rooms in a given section remains mostly the same. Even if you're a naff player like me, there'll be rooms you can solve, so it's a game everyone can get into quickly.

The only question is what happens next? The *Sabre Wulf* saga is starting to resemble the Grail legend. We can speculate tht the unseen wizard Melkhior stands for the powerful moral force of Reason, a force which can drive out the dark side of humanity only after a ritual purification full of hazards. Suitably purged of evil, will Sabreman now set out to save the world? We can only wait.

BIG K FUNNIES

TONY BENYON



LET'S GET CRITICAL...

THE BIG K Reviews!

COMPUTER GAMES
VIDEO GAMES □ UTILITIES

How we rate them–

KKK	= Magnifico!
KK	= Good-o
K	= So-So
None	= No-No

Reviewers–
Steve Keaton
Kim Aldis
John Conquest
Fin Fahey
Richard Burton
Gary Liddon
Sean Cox
Duncan Gamble



COUNTRY COTTAGES

Spectrum 48K

K K

STICKS TRICKS

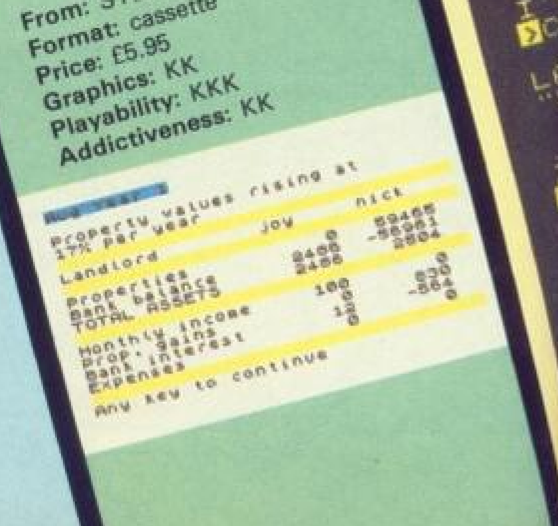
One for budding rural Rachmans — two players buy and rent cottages, racing towards a pre-set total assets figure, the size of which is used to determine the length of the game.

There are nine rather unnecessarily difficulty levels which increase the hazards; fires, ghosts, moonlighters, damage, burglaries and all the things that make being a landlord so interesting.

You start with nothing but a 12% interest bank loan facility and a clever, if rather irrelevant, landscaping system throws up a seemingly endless variety of available properties with price, condition and comments. In theory you can own up to four, but your bank manager limits your spending power. Once you have a cottage, you advertise for tenants — but set the rent too high and you get no response.

Similarly you can raise rents, but you risk losing the tenants. Mostly single-key operated, the game runs very smoothly and the bookkeeping is very slick. But my word, what a fly-by-night lot the tenants are! Constantly moving out and breaking the place up! It's not all gravy, this landlording lark. A bit limited in that you have very few, and often no, options, but fun and original. JC.

From: STERLING
Format: cassette
Price: £5.95
Graphics: KK
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KK



REVIE

A game in the same mould as *Football Manager*. The object of the game is to reach the top managerial rating. This can only be achieved by winning the team championship league at the hardest level.

You can select the number of races in a season, but the more you have, the more careful you'll have to be with your money.

The income comes from your sponsors and if they think you're being greedy they will reduce the amount requested. It depends on your success in the last race as to whether you get what you want.

When selecting a driver you are presented with a list of well known drivers whom you employ at a set transfer fee. The same applies to the mechanics.

After each race you can see your overall performance; you then have the option of buying a new car — this affects your perfection rating.

If you enjoyed *Football Manager* this is definitely a one-up. — S.C.

GRAND PRIX MANAGER

Spectrum 48K

K K

From: SILICON JOY.
Format: cassette
Price: £6.95
Graphics: K
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: KK





K K

PINBALL WIZARD Spectrum

Sure PLAYS A MEAN SOFTWARE

Surprisingly successful attempt to simulate the not inconsiderable joys of the common pin table. Although it looks fairly mundane, the gameplay is actually quite addictive and evokes the authentic fish 'n' chips feel of a run-down pin joint. The author was obviously a devotee.

Potential gamers are advised to note that the pin-table is of the double gate variety, with high and low scoring bumpers, bonus roll-overs and a free-ball pay-off. A familiar layout. Balls are relatively fast-paced, with almost flicker-free movement, and the flipper responses are excellent. I dare say that with practice you could aim for almost any bumper onscreen. The potential for mega-scores is clearly massive.

I doubt if it'll ever replace the real thing though. Half the fun of playing the genuine article involved thwacking the pin-cabinet at some strategic point. Who could play and not taunt the tilt? Unfortunately to succumb to such temptation here would clearly have disastrous results! —S.K.

From: SAGITTARIAN SOFTWARE
Other versions: CBM 64
Format: cassette
Price: £5.95
Graphics: K
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KK



GEM

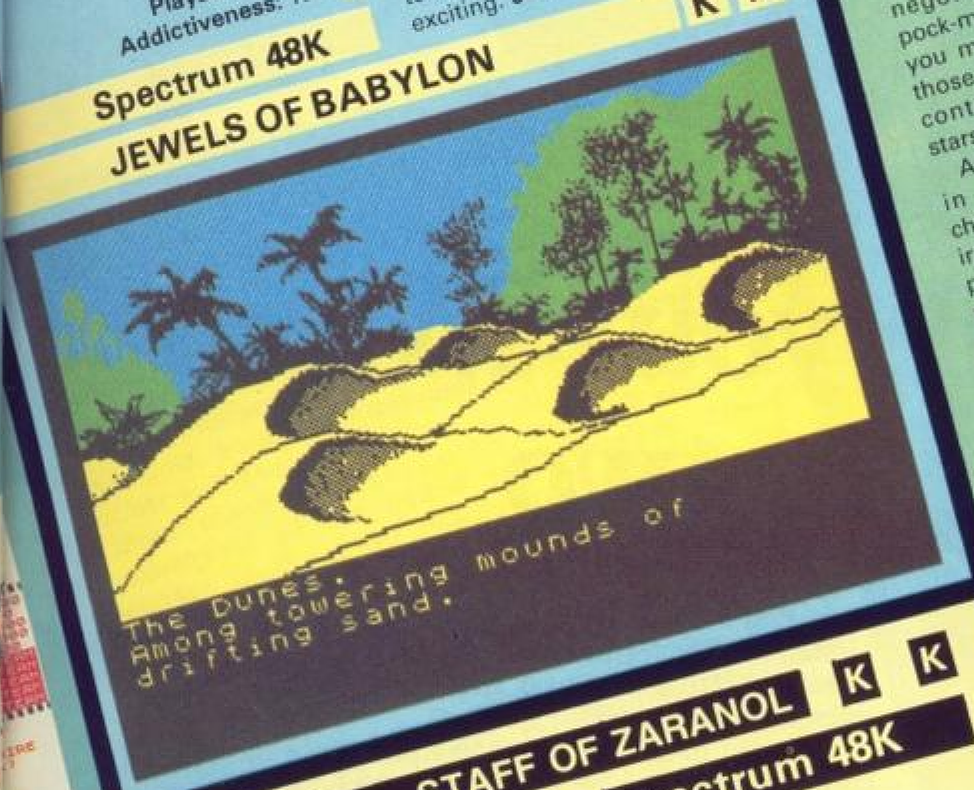
Sole survivor of a pirate attack on a ship carrying the fabled Js of B, you have found the pirate's island base and set out to recover the hot ice. In standard Interceptor style, it's a mainly text adventure, 100+ locations, with periodic and brilliant, if rather unnecessaary, graphics, far superior to those of their earlier *Forest At World's End*. A very sophisticated command analyser makes it possible, and necessary, to enter complex actions. Getting off your ship, for example, is done by 'climb down ladder'. There are three mazes, jungle, swamp and thicket, very early on with not much in the way of loose objects to use for mapping them. Beyond them lie further hazards, such as lip-licking cannibals, before you get to the main course. Fraught and exciting. **JC.**

From: INTERCEPTOR
Format: cassette
Price: £5.50
Graphics: KKK
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: KK

K K

Spectrum 48K

JEWELS OF BABYLON



K K K

MOON ALERT Spectrum 48K

MOONIES



Peachy implementation of that much under-rated arcade vehicle *Moon Patrol*; the hairiest ride outside of Disneyworld's Space Mountain.

Starfighter 7 has been grounded by alien laser-fire. Having survived the crash-landing (well them's the breaks), you must try and reach the safety of Moon Base Alpha in your trusty Model T Moon Rova. However not only must you negotiate some ludicrously pock-marked terrain en route but you must also slug it out with those pesky aliens, who not content with wasting your starship, wanna waste you too!

Although intrinsically simple in concept, the combined challenge of rocks, canyons and irrepressible attackers works on practically every level. High scores demand both strategic driving and defensive shooting! However it must be said that the prog's visual FX are rather dull. When I bust a buggy I want to see it bust! At least a couple of wheels should come bouncing out of the debris!

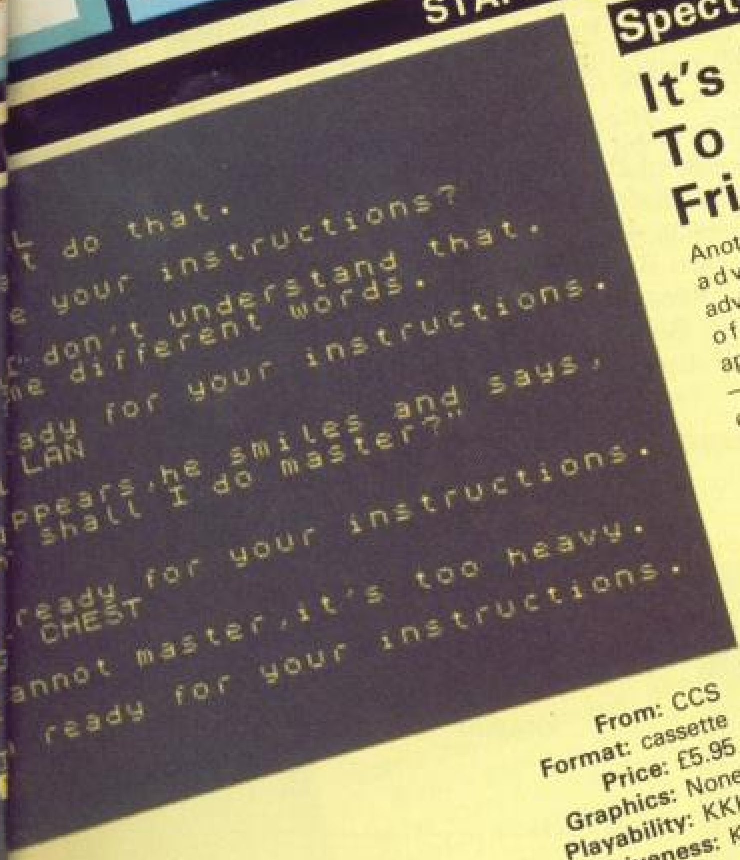
Dragon Data managed this to great effect on their splendid *Lunar Patrol* prog a while ago. The Spectrum buggy just sort of implodes. The Currah Microspeech routines are also rather uninteresting. Unless more notable chat is buried deeper within the prog, it seems hard pressed to do more than count you in and out. Still I'm nitpicking. Playwise this is neat stuff and if I was you I'd book a lunar lesson right away. **S.K.**

From: OCEAN SOFTWARE
Format: cassette
Price: £6.90
Graphics: KK
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KK

STAFF OF ZARANOL K K

Spectrum 48K

It's Nice To Have Friends



Another of CCS's excellent text adventures with all the advantages and disadvantages of Quill generation. As apprentice to the mighty Zaranol — who's off at a sorcerers' convention — you find yourself in dire magical straits, cursed by a demon, and must round up five items to get out from under. There are only 45 locations, but the puzzles, if not the most difficult around, are well conceived and fairly unusual. One radical departure is that the two different Help functions (one summons a friend, the other is a straightforward appeal) both work quite often. Just as well, because a mere novice like yourself isn't too hip to the high level magic that's going down. Crisp, clear and fun. **JC.**

From: CCS
Format: cassette
Price: £5.95
Graphics: None
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KK

ASTRONUT K K K

Spectrum 48K



The object of *Astronut* is to push three blocks onto matter transporters at the bottom of the screen but there are many things to stop you. Unlike Software Projects other games you don't have the option to jump, you rely completely on two little erupting volcanoes which will throw you up to the first bridge or ledge you reach.

You can drop bombs which will kill the enemies but there is a time delay before they explode making it difficult to time the destruction.

Astronut contains 15 screens, every one better than the next. If you can't clear a sheet you have the option to go directly to any other after the game.

Graphically it is excellent but unfortunately the instructions don't tell you which keys to use. This is one game I will add to my collection. —**S.C.**

From: SOFTWARE PROJECTS
Format: cassette
Price: £5.95
Graphics: KKK
Addictiveness: KKK
Playability: KK



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SYSTEM 15000 CBM 64

K K K

Heavily publicised over the last few years is the growing phenomenon of the Hacker, the dedicated key-plonker who, through a vicious sense of humour or sheer bloody-mindedness, has been dreaming up new and interesting things to do with lorry-loads of Coca-Cola, bank accounts and Big Ron's favourite nuclear warhead.

More recently, in this country, we have seen the readjustment of the pound to a sensible, albeit incorrect, level and the headlong nosedive into the Royal love-letters in the private parts of Prestel. Overall, considering the popularity of these activities, I find it surprising that a game of this nature has not been seen before.

System 15000 is a telephone communications simulation, with a built in plot to keep the interest and adrenalin on the move. A friend has been ripped off to the tune of 1.5 million by a company called Realco. Another friend, Mike, has been investigating but Realco has heavy Mafia connections and the man with the violin case and zoot suit is looking to examine the inside of his head with a meat cleaver. Knowing a good friend and complete idiot when he sees one he dumps the whole lot in your lap, grabs a number nine yak and heads for the safety of the Tibetan monastic community. On your head now lies the responsibility of finding the bucks and putting them back in the right place.

Information is minimal. A telephone number, entry code and occasional hints from an interested party are all you get and using this you have to find and gain access to the relevant systems. Doing this within a week is unlikely. I spent two days discovering that it is hard and lots of fun but little else — certainly the only computer simulation I've played that bears any resemblance to the real thing.

Dialling is done from the keyboard, to the sound of dialling or engaged tones, and the System 15000 software automatically detects incoming messages. If the telephone company notices something and starts poking around, lines are automatically cut.

A nice game — even if it does take hours to load — safer than the real thing, lighter on the pocket and, if planting Pershings in the Kremlin is your style, very good practice for the real thing. — **K.A.**

From: AVS
Format: cassette
Price: £12.95
Graphics: K
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KKK

SENTINEL AVENGER PROTEUS FIREFLASH

K

Spectrum 48K

Software is being packaged more and more like lager. This one's a cut-price four-pack from Abacus, and works out at about half normal Spectrum price. Furthermore two of the cassettes have an extra bonus game on the other side. So clearly the quantity problem isn't the quantity offered here, but what about the quality? I have to say that unfortunately, these aren't the most stunning arcade games in the universe.

Sentinel is a sort of *Asteroids* variant. your ship can be rotated left and right, or thrust applied. You must avoid obstacles, such as your own space station, or the

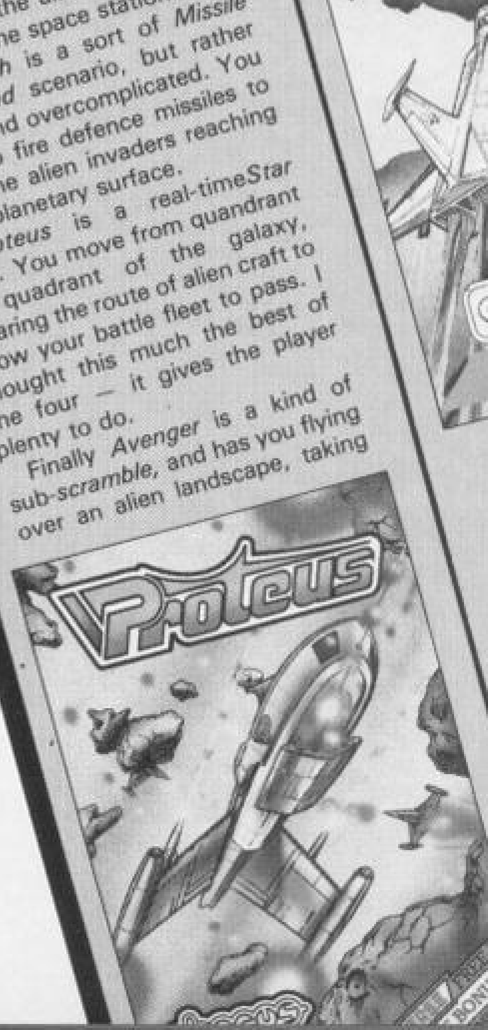


asteroids and aliens. The object is to stop the aliens before they take out the space station.

Fireflash is a sort of *Missile Command* scenario, but rather fiddly and overcomplicated. You have to fire defence missiles to stop the alien invaders reaching your planetary surface.

Proteus is a real-time*Star Trek*. You move from quandrant to quadrant of the galaxy, clearing the route of alien craft to allow your battle fleet to pass. I thought this much the best of the four — it gives the player plenty to do.

Finally *Avenger* is a kind of sub-*scramble*, and has you flying over an alien landscape, taking





out fuel dumps and other installations on the way. You have to watch out for nuclear reactors though, in case you go up in a rather spectacular mushroom cloud. On the reverse of *Fireflash* is *Destroyer*, a rather simple-minded naval game, and *Proteus* has *Android Pit Rescue* on its flipside, which has you moving from level of a collapsed pit rescuing trapped miners.

It's unfair to criticise these latter two, as they are a free bonus. however, I thought the four main programs could have been better, even at this price. The graphics are rather tacky-looking, and although the game design differs in many ways from the arcade originals, the changes, to my mind, detract from the playability, rather than increase it. I'm carping a bit though. After all these are games, they are playable and they are cheap. Possibly a good stocking filler. —**F.F.**

From: ABACUS SOFTWARE
Format: cassette
Price: £14.99 (set of four)
Graphics: K
Playability: K
Addictiveness: KK





RAID OVER MOSCOW CBM64 K K

RAID OVER NEASDEN

How ironic, I sit down to write my review of *Raid Over Moscow*, and John Lennon comes on the radio singing "Give Peace a Chance". Some hope Johnny-baby, Ronnie Reagan is back in the White House, and the Yankee Doodle Dandies are gearing up for war in space. Forgive the moralising, but what else can you say about this game, the first piece of Propagandaware. Remember, with modern military technology, there is very little difference between vapourising Russians on a home computer screen and vapouring them on a missile silo screen somewhere deep under Utah.

If *Raid Over Moscow* was a naff game, then it wouldn't matter. The trouble is that the game is OK. Not brilliant, just fairly good. The graphics are great, and the sounds superb, though the game is in the final analysis disappointing. It resembles the earlier smash-hit game Beach-head, though it is much more sophisticated. The game opens with a space-shuttle's-eye view of the world, and you have to scramble space planes. To do this you must manoeuvre them in zero-gravity, I found the joystick controls are not easy to use. It then goes onto a Zaxxon-like screen, followed by a screen resembling the last one in *Beach-head*, and on and on through seven screens.

Like any good game, you get better at *Raid Over Moscow* the longer you play, but it is a real bore going back to the start with each new game. I didn't find it very addictive because of this. Though it is fund for the first few minautes, I found that I quickly lost interest. I'm sure it will be popular with little boys of all ages, especially those who work on the Pentagon. But ultimately, *Raid Over Moscow* is insubstantial, Candy-Floss software. — **B.B.**

From: ACCESS/US GOLD
Format: cassette
Price: £7.95
Graphics: KKK
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: K

FELIX AND THE EVIL WEEVILS K
BBC

WEEVIL SWING TOGETHER

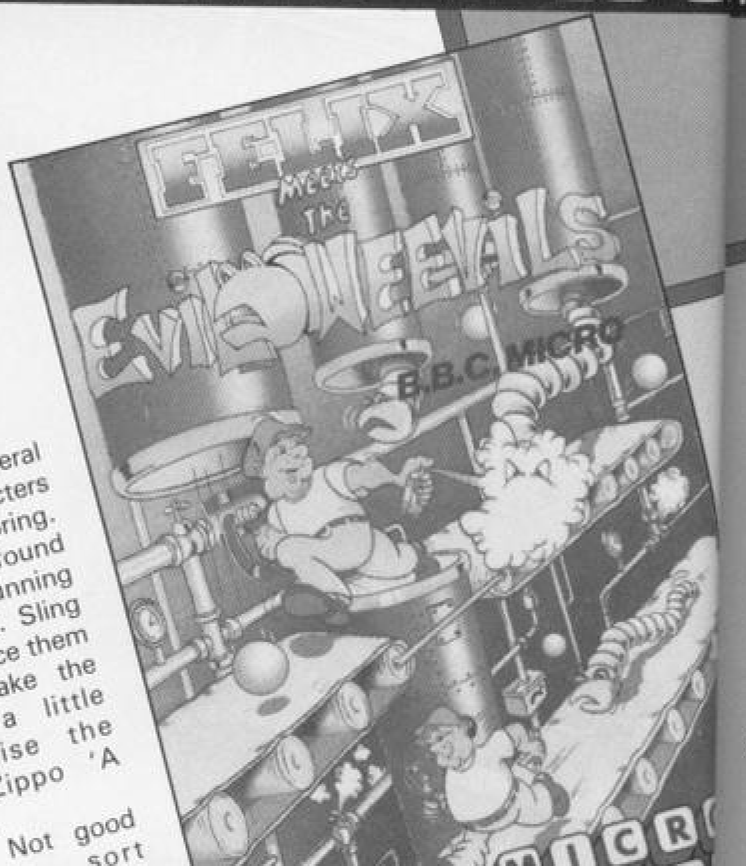
Yet another of the several computer game characters who is starting to get boring. In the last epic, Felix found himself in a factory, running up and down ladders. Sling the ladders out, replace them with tubes and make the conveyors look a little different, likewise the baddies...and Zippo 'A brand new game'.

It's not bad. Not good either, more sort of...indifferent. This time round the factory has been overrun by weevils, small wormlike creatures who slide about the place doing nothing in particular but junking Felixes. Felix in turn junks weevils by grabbing aerosol cans that appear at random intervals about the screen and spraying them. One can wastes one weevil.

It goes without saying that the touch of a weevil is death, as is the touch of the ball bearings that travel along the belts and down the tubes.

Not the most exciting games from Program Power's vast library and certainly not the most interesting character. Maybe a more interesting occupation, gambling or serious drinking, might perk the lad up. — **K.A.**

From: MICRO POWER
Format: cassette
Price: £6.95
Graphics: K
Playability: K
Addictiveness: K











MICRO OLYMPICS K

BBC

KNEES BEND, GIRLS

This amazing piece which supposedly stretches the limits of the BBC to new boundaries turns out to be a prehistoric version of *Declathlon*, with the unfortunate athlete reduced to a spindly creature with knock-knees and a weird ability to run in slow motion. The eleven track events shouted about with such pride turn out to be variations on three; running, choose-anything-from-a-short-distance-to-an-insane-distance, throwing a plate, a stick, or a stick with a lump on it and finally, jumping up, along, or up with the help of another stick.

A friend and I used to get a great deal of fun from the original. Two complete morons containing an outrageous level of alcohol, pounding the hell out of a video game machine at four in the morning is not something to be missed, but this fails to generate any interest whatsoever. The graphics are slow and not very convincing, the loading system from tape is lunacy, ploughing through several programs before finding the selected event. Worst of all are the keyboard controls. As in the original, one key controls each leg, each pressed alternately to make the man run. Getting anywhere at all means hammering at the keyboard like a beserk piledriver, the net result being a mangled pile of plastic and a very wealthy repairman before half an hour has passed. It might also be useful to put the instructions on paper instead of in a separate program where you can't see them when they're really needed. — **K.A.**

From: MICRO USER
Format: cassette/disc
price: £5.95 cassete, £7.95 disc
Graphics: K
Playability: K
Addictiveness: None

INTERVIEW CBM 64 K K K

GIZZA JOB, WACK

Getting a job can be a right old game. This right old game is all about getting to an interview on time, and intact. It all starts when you are sitting in your living room. A message comes through the letter box telling you to get down to the Front Runner office in 15 minutes for an interview for a job as a programmer. Then the action starts.

Front Runner doesn't appear to be a very experienced software house. It expects potential programmers to turn up on time, and smartly dressed. Anyone who has met a real programmer knows that they make the Young Ones seem smart and sophisticated. Jeff Minter didn't get where he is today by wearing a blue suit. Still, try turning up at the Front Runner office looking like anything other than a showroom dummy and you can say goodbye to the job.

The game has two stages. The first involves a dash down the street to the bank. As you make your way there are open manholes for you to fall into, and unemptied dustbins to get you dirty. (The local council must have been cutting services again.) If the municipal madness doesn't get you, falling flower pots and roaming dogs will. Moving the joystick should help you avoid the worst; however, certain situations cannot be sidestepped. In light of the conservative nature of the game, I'm not surprised to see the banana skins lying in wait for you.

Once you reach the bank, you move onto another section of the game. Here you must make your way around the same town, only this time it is shown in an aerial view. You still use the joystick and there are still hazards to negotiate. You can go to the cleaners to clean your suit, to the shoemakers to repair shoes, and to the tailors to mend the holes in your clothes. Personally, Front Runner can stuff the job, I hate wearing suits. As for the game it's graphically brilliant, but becomes boring rather quickly. — **B.B.**

From: FRONT RUNNER
Format: cassette/disc
Price: £7.95 (cassette)
£9.95 (disc)
Graphics: KKK
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: K



GALAXIA Amstrad K K K

VIOLENCE

Nice one this. Instead of battling past the vicious Vlergs from the planet Zug so you can dock with the Starship Saccharine you have to splatter sausages and batter budgies (no letters from budgiephiles please) and then dock with the Starship Saccharine. Not very original but this is what I've been waiting for since I got my CPC64 — pure violence. None of those namby pamby cute games for me (I spit on *Pacman*). Killing is fun especially when the killee crumples up to the sound of wonderfully violent white noise.

The game resembles *Arcadia* twisted through ninety degrees The controls are nice and simple. Up, Down, Thrust and Fire. A game to play on Monday mornings. No concentration needed. Just sit down and destroy.

Now back to the sausages and budgies. The budgies drop normal budgie type things on you. Obscene but expected. The sausages are realistic and look freshly cooked. The game has real food appeal as its cast of baddies also includes a violent herd of mushrooms (is it a herd? Maybe a flock). Anyway, giving them a deadly dose of death ray is fun and it's all very addictive. This is the sort of thing that scares Archbishops into writing to *The Times* about how this computer lark is all violence and should be stamped out before it goes too far. Still it all oozes the touch of a professional with pretty title screen and comprehensive instructions.

One moan though (and there usually is one). *Galaxia* is totally devoid of a joystick option. Pretty silly if the machine comes complete with a joystick port. It wouldn't really bother me that much of the author's idea of comfortable keys didn't verge on masochism.

If synthetic violence does happen to be on your list of ten favourite pastimes I think *Galaxia* could be a sensible buy for you. It was certainly a sensible blag for me. — **G.L.**

From: KUMA
Format: cassette
Price: £6.95
Graphics: KKK
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: KKK



BRUCE LEE
CBM 64 KKK
A KICKER

Because of a production glitch BIG K's original review of the Atari version of this excellent Kung Fu action game disappeared from the pages, but now the Commodore version's out, it's time to draw attention to this real goodie.

As Bruce you have to penetrate the fortress of the evil wizard to claim his fortune, and Datasoft don't stint on it — infinite wealth and the secret of immortality, no less. You can chop and kick, the targets being the Green Yamos, who also kick, just as good as Brucie, and ninjas brandishing bokken sticks, the former needing three hits to put them down, the latter two. Natch, that's not the end of your problems, there are hazards and traps all the way before you get to the goodies.

There are twenty screens to get through and, of course, once through them you start all over again at a harder level. You can play Bruce against the computer or two-handed, with one player controlling the Green Yamo, or both alternating as Bruce, or trading places.

The two versions are very similar, but the Commodore concedes a lot points to the Atari in details. The Atari graphics are much better, the action is smoother and the animation far superior. But this is to compare good with very good — the '64 version is still well worth having. —**J.C.**

From: DATASOFT/US GOLD
Other versions: Atari
Format: cassette
Price: £9.95/£14.95 disc
Graphics: KKK
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KKK

THRUSTA
CBM 64

The instructions say that you're proud of your spaceship Thrusta 1 and that together you make a good team. Well I wasn't and we didn't.

Using joystick or keyboard you move a little white ship around the screen shooting alien guards who patrol around the hatching eggs at the bottom of the screen. There are two types of aliens. One of them you shoot, the other is killed nudging boulders on top of it. This process can be very slow and quite boring (the sound effects don't exactly help). Once this is done you continue to the next level — pushing boulders on the aliens and shooting the guards (yep, the same thing).

If this sounds very uninspiring to you that's because it is.

Thrusta has come to be one of the worst games Software Projects have done so far. I would advise you to spend your money on one of their better titles. —**S.C.**

From: SOFTWARE PROJECTS
Format: cassette
Price: £5.95
Graphics: K
Playability: K
Addictiveness: None.



MILLIONAIRE
BBC/ Electron

If making money is as easy as this, pass a piece of the action this way. Ten minutes at the keyboard resulted in the acquisition of new premises, enough usable currency to finance more than a few nights of severe drunken mayhem, and an acute sense of boredom.

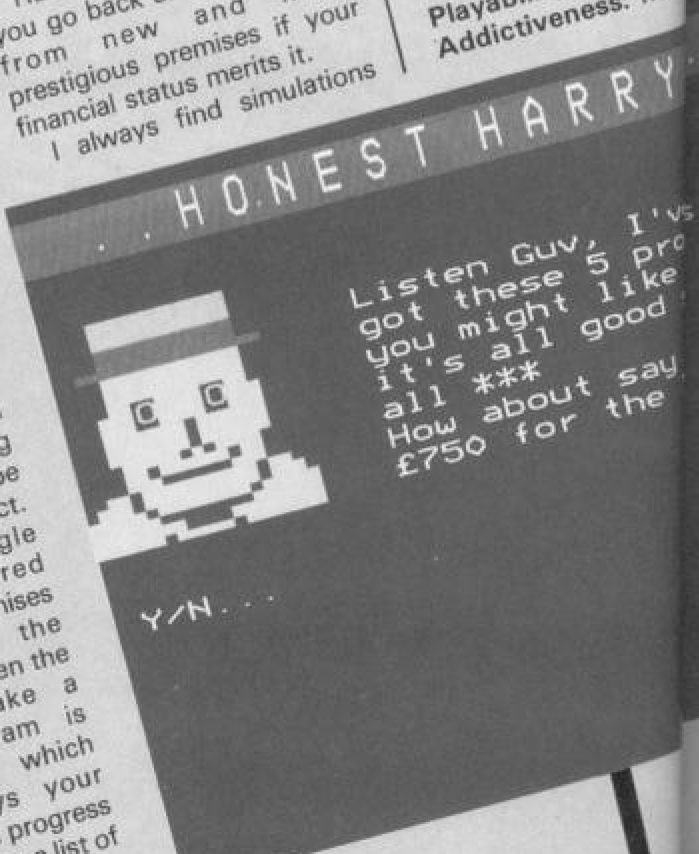
Millionaire is based heavily on the notion that computer games are an easy way to a fast buck — once upon a time a popular idea but in the light of recent events now treated with more caution. It's a simulation involving you as a programmer and the big wide world which might be interested in your product. Starting with a single program, five hundred pounds and grotty premises (Yes, yes, get to the point—Ed.) you are given the opportunity to make a million. The program is locked in a loop which repeatedly displays your assets followed by a progress chart, news, and then a list of work options; programming, selling to retailers or approaching Honest Harry, a character of doubtful origin.

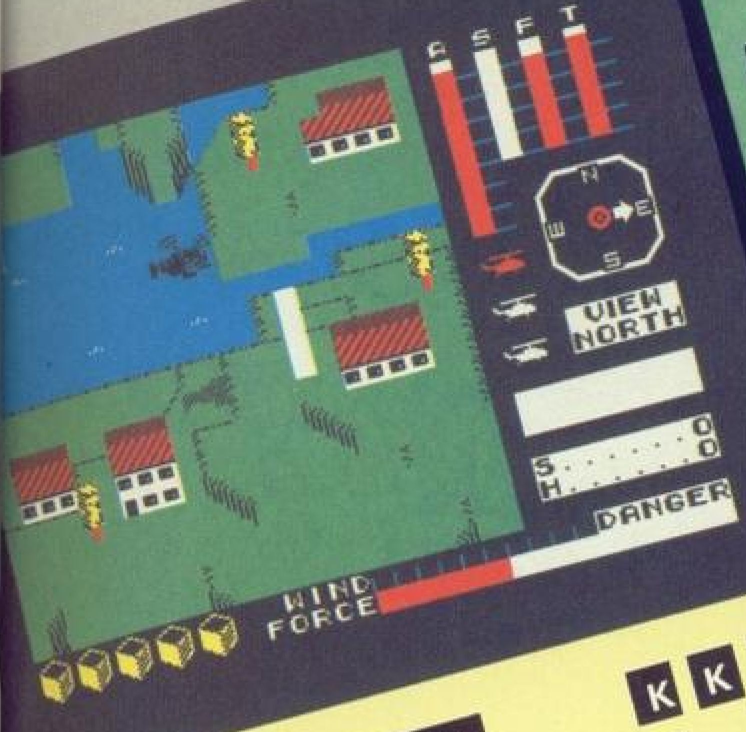
Following this comes a list of promotional ideas to try — and then a few questions about how much you want to spend on advertising and tape duplicating.

Having sorted this lot out you go back and start again, from new and more prestigious premises if your financial status merits it.

I always find simulations uninspiring to say the least, this one particularly so. A repetitive and predictable game that generally gives feeling of not giving much return for cash laid ou —**K.A.**

From: INCENTIVE
Format: cassette
Price: £6.50
Graphics: K
Playability: K
Addictiveness: none





CYCLONE Spectrum 48K

KKK

A REAL BLAST

What's with this helicopter craze? The damn things are whup-whupping all over the place. Blue Thunders, Airwolves, Whirlybirds (oops, that was a while back). Whatever, if it's got rotor blades and flies it's a star. So, *Cyclone* is a helicopter game — not the first and not the last, but certainly one of the best.

The scenario is a small group of islands somewhere in an unnamed ocean. You have control of a lone chopper (or three, if you count the number of 'lives' you have) which you take island-hopping in search of five crates of medical supplies. However, wandering about the area is a nasty cyclone. As it nears your position the wind strength increases and the helicopter becomes downright difficult to control. As if that wasn't enough, rogue aircraft hurtle in from nowhere on kamikaze missions to take you out if you happen to be in the way. We're talking mid-air collisions here, friends.

Assuming you can live with all these various threats to life and limb you take off on your mission, lifting off from your base on . . uh . . Base Island. A 'shadow' on the ground gives a good indication of your height. Calling up the map screen you choose a heading and take off into the wild blue yonder, keeping a close watch on your wind force indicator (or map screen) for the advancing cyclone. Locating an island, you check it out closely for the all-important crate. If it's there you go into a hover and descend, the grappling hook deploying automatically at a certain height and winching up the prize.

Oh yes, you may see some tiny figures desperately waving at you. These are survivors. Rescue them for bonus points — but only if you have time. Those five crates, of course, take absolute priority over a few natives stupid enough to get themselves caught in a cyclone.

Fuel and time are both limited and there will be the need for touching down to re-fuel at frequent intervals. Landing the chopper is not easy and needs a very delicate touch.

Collect all five crates and return to Base Island for a new mission.

In *Cyclone* Vortex have employed the same smooth-scrolling 3D-effect landscaping first seen in *Android 2* and developed in *T.L.L.* The small but highly detailed shape of the chopper flies convincingly over green, hilly islands and wave-flecked sea. It responds well to the controls, turning in a lifelike manner.

On-screen displays monitor altitude, speed, fuel, time, direction and wind force. A useful additional feature is the ability to change your viewpoint by 180°. There is also a warning of approaching aircraft.

Altogether a neat game that scores especially high on both addictiveness and playability. A little too similar to *T.L.L.* in appearance, maybe, but unique enough for that not to worry me.

— **R.B.**

From: VORTEX SOFTWARE
Format: cassette
Price: £6.95
Graphics: KKK
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KKK

BOULDER DASH
Spectrum 48K

KKK

A CRUSHER

An ex-friend of mine has a Commodore 64 and the only thing I miss about not being his friend is that I can't play *Boulder Dash* no more. Well that's all changed. No, ex-friend hasn't become friend again but *Boulder Dash* has become a Spectrum game. My initial reaction was pure joy but then I thought of what the 64 could do and then what the Spectrum couldn't do. I'm surprised I even bothered to load it in. You see *Boulder Dash* heavily relies on quick scrolling, lots of pretty colours and neato music all of which the Spectrum isn't really known for. Well the game loaded and it was *all* there. Boy, was I shocked.

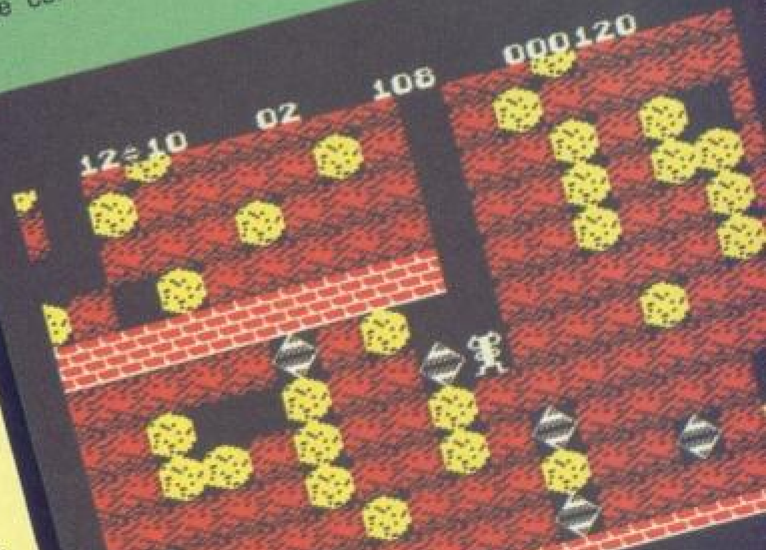
A few of you out there may be confused. You may not have heard of *Boulder Dash*. In that case you've probably lived in a shoebox the last six months. Still, for all you hermits here's a scenario description. Rockford has to run about various caves to collect jewels so he can move on to the next cave. It's not really as simple as that since there are boulders all over the gaff supported by gunge which Rockford can obliterate. It's all very difficult to explain but much easier to play. Having eighty possible levels is nice on any game but since what you have to accomplish on each screen is so varied the only way you'd be able to appreciate it is to play it.

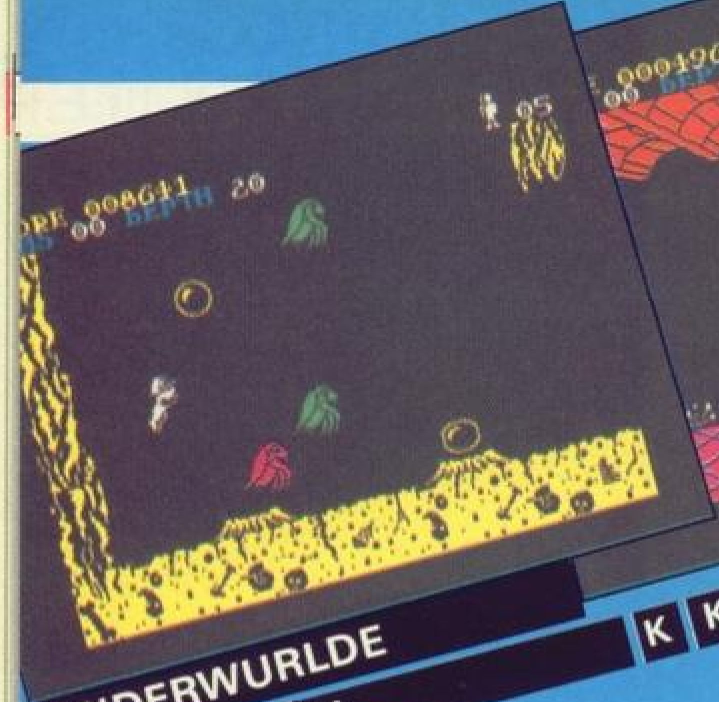
What makes *Boulder Dash* such a hit for me is that it's so addictive. In all honesty I can say this is the best game, to date, for the Spectrum. Which isn't bad going since a week ago I would've said it wasn't really Spectrum fodder.

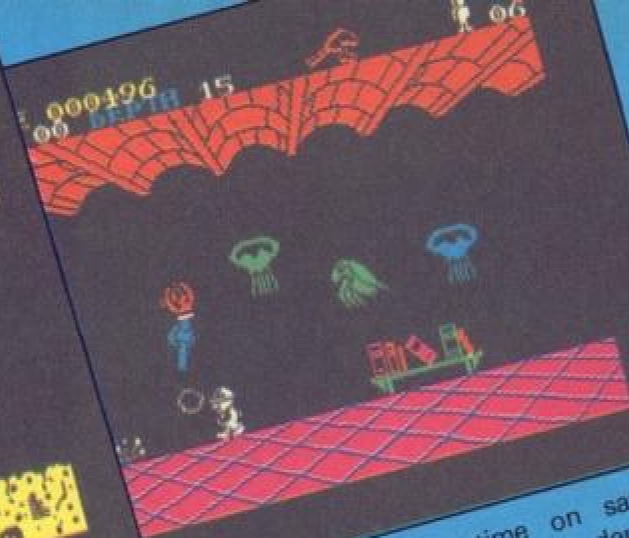
Boulder Dash is a definite must if you use a Spectrum so I'm afraid it's fork out the money time again folks.

—**G.L.**

From: FRONT RUNNER
Format: cassette
Price: £7.95
Graphics: KKK
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KKK







UNDERWURLDE — K K K

Spectrum 48K

A new Ultimate release. The very thought sends shivers down any sane reviewer's spine. He knows that in the short time he is given to test the game there is no possible way he can explore its every facet, find every nuance of gameplay. He also knows that, by the time his review sees print, ten billion smart-ass whizz-brats will have cracked the game and sent in highly-detailed maps of the whole play area, complete with strategies, which the soul-less Editor (may bats inhabit his word processor) will wave in front of him and demand to know why he didn't do better. It's just not worth it, I tell you.

All I'm going to say is that *Underwurlde* is a fabulous new game from Ultimate, with wonderful graphics and lots and lots of incredible features. Don't miss it. So there. **(That's not enough, worm. More — or the GCE Revision Packs await . . . Rev. Ed.)**

Sigh. Oh well, *Underwurlde* is very good, actually. It features Sabreman, of *Sable Wulf* fame, this time on safari through the Stygian depths where lurk all manner of demonic dangers. And, like *Sabre Wulf*, it owes much to *Atic Atac* for its style of gameplay. Yep, it's another graphic / arcade / strategy / adventure game.

Once more Sabreman is travelling through a vast, interconnecting system of screens (over 60 are claimed) containing rooms, chambers, pits, wells, rocks, ledges and what-have-you. Every step of his journey is dogged by hordes of winged harpies and what look like flying jellyfish which swoop down hassling our hero's progress and generally using him as a human pinball. They can be destroyed but weapons have to be found, along with energy-giving gems. You rapidly grow to hate and curse the flying fiends.

Frustration level on *Underwurlde* is exceedingly high. Remember, the Spectrum keyboard was not built to take heavy punishment.

Also along the way the Sabreman will meet monstrous guardians, ride volcanic bubbles, swing from ropes, avoid poisonous plants, falling rocks and encounter stal-actites and mysterious chests of drawers.

As is by now traditional with Ultimate's epic arcade-adventures, the player is left to discover the majority of the game's features for him/herself. The barest of hints are given instructions — after which you're on your own. After your allotted lives are used up a percentage indicator informs you of how much of the game you penetrated. You grow to hate this as well.

At the end of the Sabre-man's sojourn, according to the cryptic text, lies ". . . the Ultimate palace of darkness" — wherein lurks Old Tim — sorry, Nick himself and the only way of escape. I can believe it — I'll never see it — but I can believe it.

Graphics, sound, colour are all up to Ultimate's very high standards making his game good value for money. Animation is excellent, especially Sabreman's leaps and tumbles.

In the midst of all this general euphoria let me strike a chord of caution. Brilliant as Ultimate are at turning out top quality software they are in danger of becoming some-thing of a one-note company. *Sabre Wulf*, *Underwurlde* and, to a certain degree, *Knightlore* are all cut from the same cloth as the highly successful *Atic Atac*. Naturally a company should build on success but not to the extent of ignoring other popular gaming themes. I hope Ultimate's limited outlook will soon be broadened.

Now I return to *Underwurlde* in a vain attempt to unlock more of its secrets. If any kind soul (I really didn't mean what I said about whizz-brats) would like to help this humble reviewer escape his personal hell send in your tips, your maps, your hints, your cash . . . oops. **(Enough, vermin. Another new Ultimate game has arrived! Rev. Ed.)**

Aaargghh!! — **R.B.**

From: ULTIMATE
Format: cassette
Price: £9.95
Graphics: KKK
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: KK

ROLAND AHOY Amstrad — K K

Roland's back and the scenario is an original one. Original? Yes, dear punter.

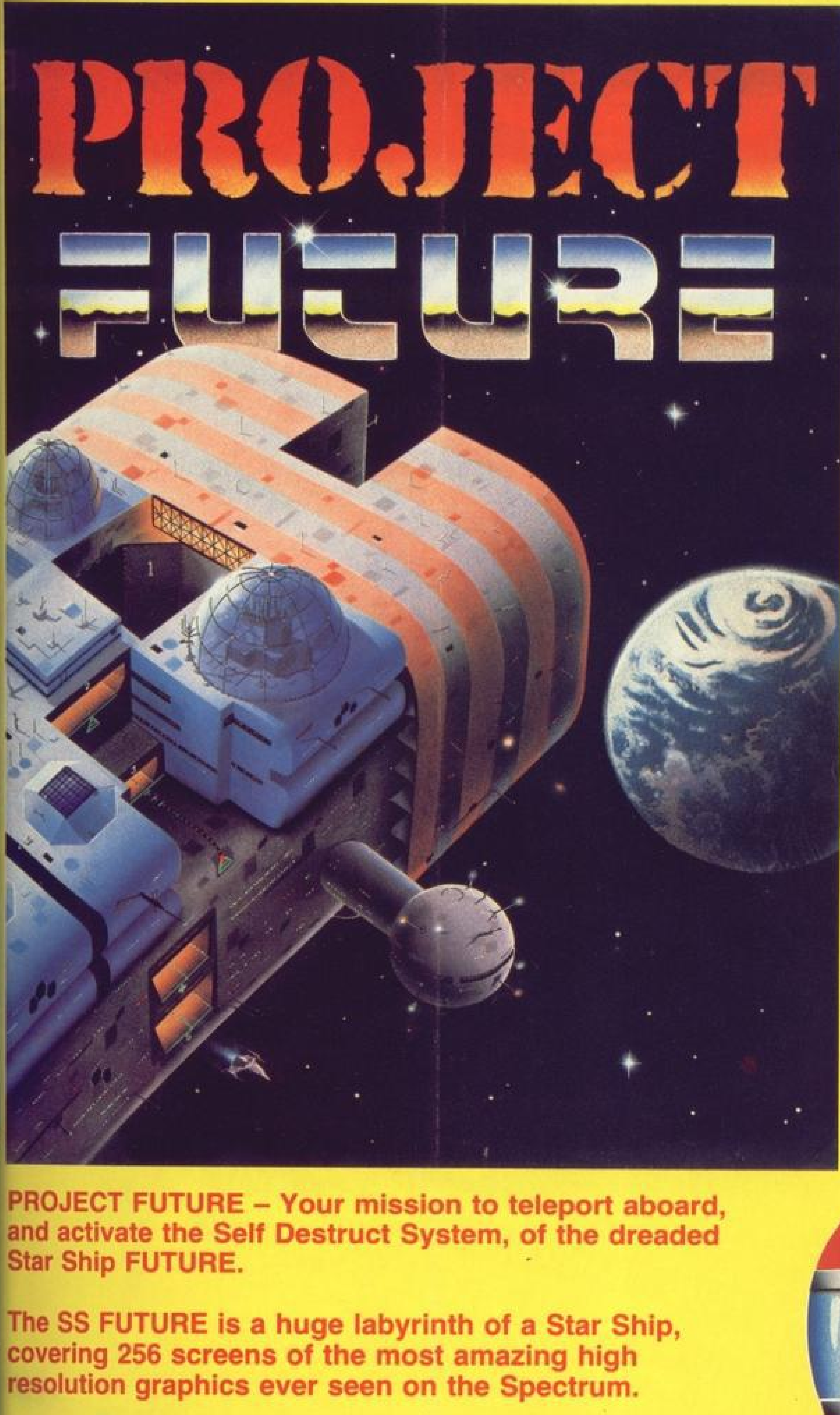
Roland, sprite of a thousand fonts (I mean this guy looks drastically different in every prog he features in), has taken to the high seas and is generally trying to rob everyone blind. Lloyds Shipping would not approve. He is in fact walking on the wild side and has become a pirate. Klepto Roland first visits Powder Quay to steal cannonballs to blow up some of the harbour to steal the treasure so he can hide it in Treasure Cove. I'm not too sure about the ethics but that all fades into irrelevance.

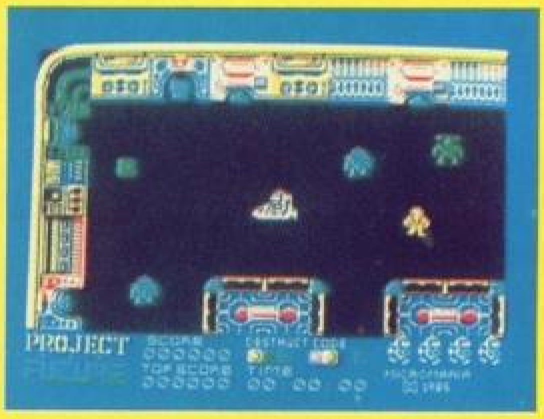
I really do like this game and would even buy it! So remember, Amsoft, theres gold in them thar punters and you're more likely to get it if you keep producing quality gear like this.

P.S. If anyone is interested where the Roland handle came from (come on, there must be someone vaguely interested), the chief designer of the whole Amstrad project is called Roland Perry. That amazed you, didn't it? — **G.L.**

From: AMSOFT
Format: cassette
Price: £8.90
Graphics: KKK
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KKK









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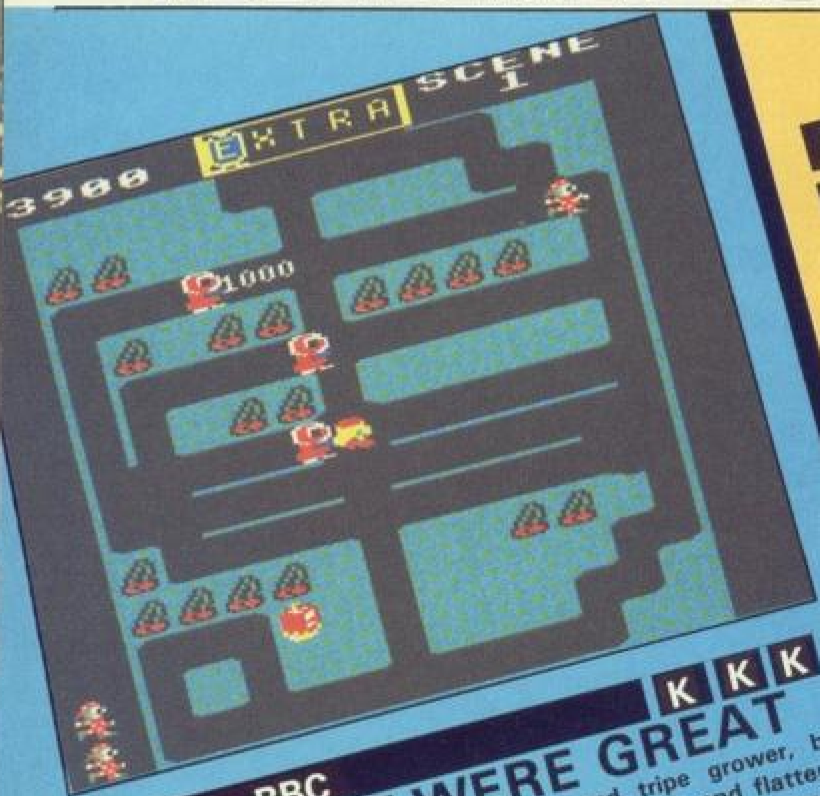
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MR. EE BBC

KKK

BY 'ECK, IT WERE GREAT

Mr. Ee, celebrated Yorkshire magician and tripe grower, by 'eck, takes to the underworld, collects cherries and flattens nasty chomping creatures. And if he finds some coal down there could he bring back a lump or two for Ian, 'cos Maggie's getting cold.

Around this time last year I was busy sinking thousands into an arcade game called *Mr. Do*. I was in a bad way, nothing could could drag me away from this thing — closing time, total inebration or a sharp clout across the back of the head with a blunt instrument. Now Micro Power have brought it to the home market and the same thing applies except that the blunt instrument usually has a message attached to it to the effect that dinner's ready or it's time to go to work.

Totally faithful to the original, it's yet another tunnelling game but with a humour and orginality that sets it apart from the rest. *Mr. Ee* is a wizard-type character who finds himself burrowing through the earth chased by Umphs — teeth with feet — and collecting cherries. Two methods of protection lie at the disposal of this character; pancaking Umphs with the many apples that lie buried underground or hurling his crystal ball at them. It bounces around the maze created by *Mr. Ee's* tunnelling like a tennis ball on speed until it hits something. If you miss the target you've got problems, you only have one ball and have to chase round like a lunatic trying to get it back. Once all the monsters have gone you get a different shaped screen with more intelligent monsters, ten screens in all.

A great game from the same source as *Killer Gorilla*. It shows shows. — K.A.

From: MICRO POWER
Format: cassette/disc
Price: £6.95 cassette, £9.95 disc
Graphics: KKK
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KKK

TARZAN

KK

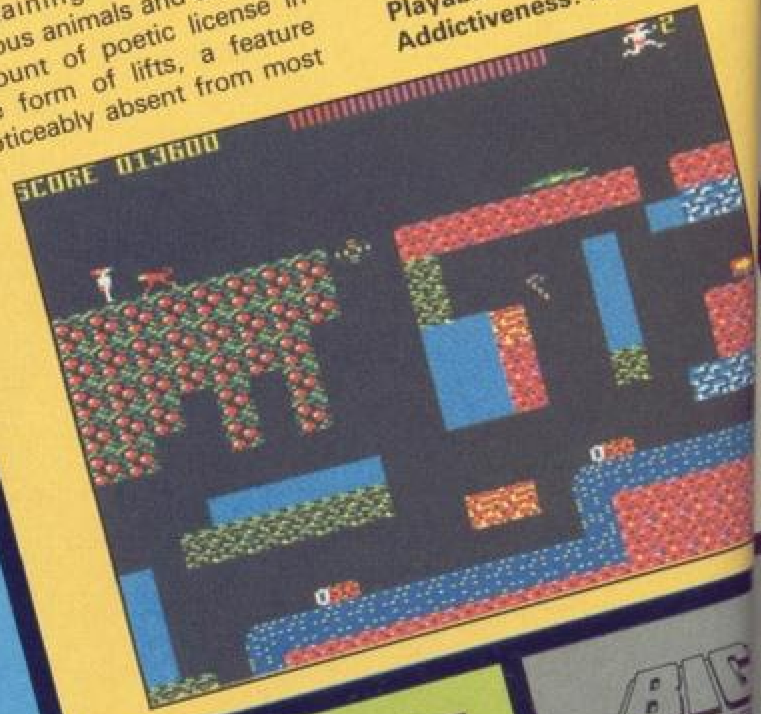
BBC

The mega macho character on the front cover performing major dental surgery on a crocodile bears little resemblance to the wimp in leopard skin Y-fronts who presents himself ready for action on the screen. Nevertheless this is an engaging, if rather simple, game.

Tarzan, primal urges flailing in the wind, swings through the jungle to rescue Jane from a fate worse than death. (assuming she wants to be rescued). A grand total of four screens, rather minimal these days, containing rivers, logs, various animals and a certain amount of poetic license in the form of lifts, a feature noticeably absent from most safari trips.

This is not a game that relies heavily on the quality of its graphics and the sound has overtones of a strangled synthesiser, but it does contain enough novelty to make it enjoyable and the level of difficulty is just enough to stop you giving up in total despair. The demonstration modes have a way of flashing off the screen just before you've had a chance to see what's happening, but then knowing too much would tke away the excitement. —**K.A.**

From: ALLIGATA
Format: cassette
Price: £7.95
Graphics: K
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: KK



BLUE RIBAND Spectrum 48K

KK

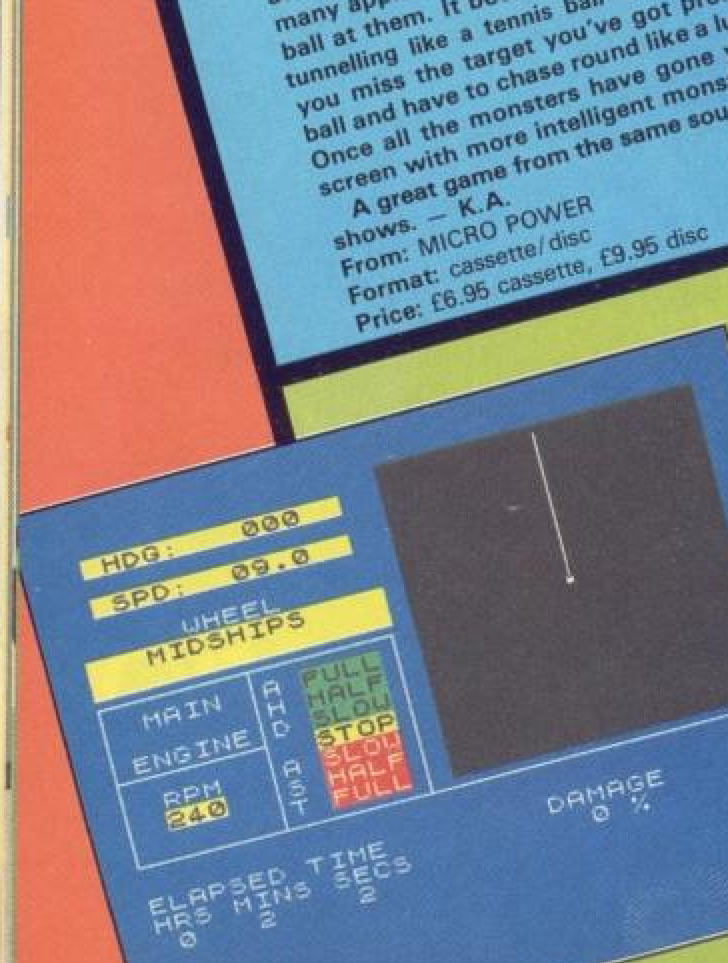
NOT THE BELGRANO

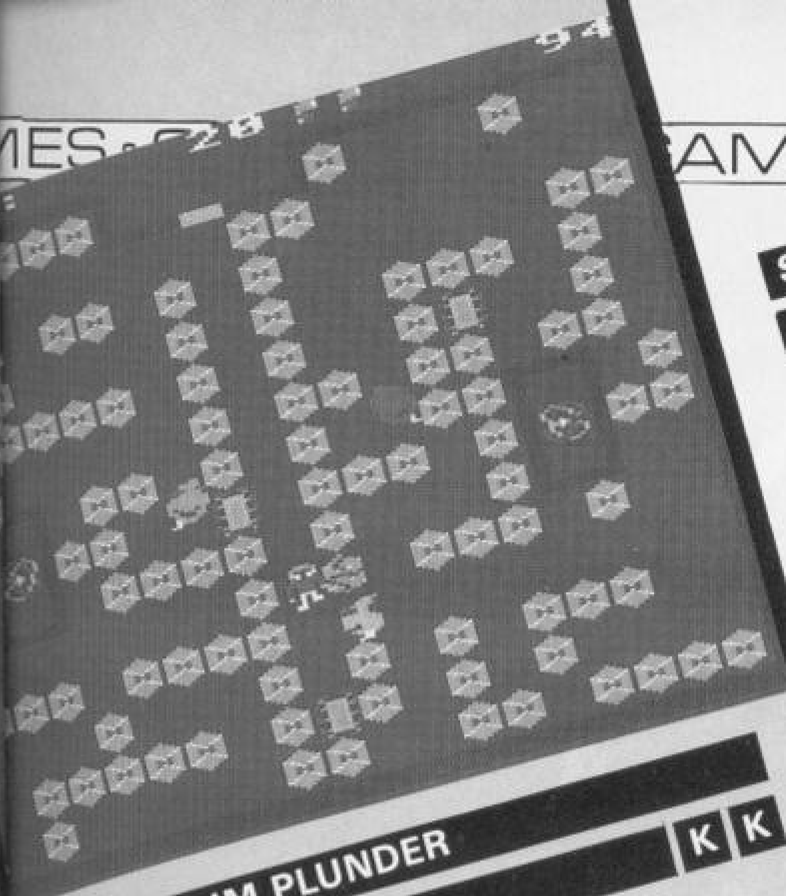
A strategic simulation in which you captain a ferry boat round a group of islands, docking at each. There are three displays; bridge controls with engine telegraph and wheel, plus the radar which is used to make final approaches; a chart of the whole area with the ship's position; and static island maps on which you can study the upcoming problems.

You set your speed and course, then move to the chart to track your progress using a hurry-up mode for open-sea passages until you near an island, then back to the radar. The islands vary in difficulty, a couple having long narrow, rock-strewn channels.

The ship simulation is very complex with problems like transverse thrust effect when reversing and helm induced yawing oscillation if you over-correct, very difficult to get out of. The game requires a very delicate touch, especially when docking, and if, like me, you have trouble with left and right, let alone port and starboard, you'll find yourself racking up damage points in very short order. Impressive, if not my cup of grog. **JC.**

From: CCS
Format: cassette
Price: £5.95
Graphics: K
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: KK





PLUTONIUM PLUNDER K K

BBC

MENTAL BLOCK

Plutonium Plunder! The name conjures up visions of heaped, charred, blackened bodies, giant mutated rats and the possibility of at least one evening's good solid entertainment. In fact, it's not the easiest of games to play — but who needs it anyway?

Yes, another sliding block game. This time the blocks are Hexoid pods with a smattering of plutonium canisters dotted around. Clear a path through the pods so that the canisters can be shunted into place behind a safety barrier while being attacked by gnomes which guard (guarden gnomes?) athe area. Life can be made slightly easier with a little gnome control before the canister-shuffling begins; either the common or garden stun with a quick shot from the hip, or the super whazzo mega-mangle, meaning a quick shove of a block in the appropriate direction.

Serious problems occur on bumping into the retaining fence which contains slightly more voltage than is required to add a shine to your hair and light up your teeth. Best avoided. Should you be a little slow in performing the allotted task then you're in dee sewage. First the blocks begin to multiply like rabbits with a truckload of Spanish Fly, then, without warning, disappear leaving a clear screen, large numbers of nasties and no protection bar an unresponsive shooter and a fast turn of speed. Needless to say the canisters still have to be shunted to safety.

As I said, not an easy game but if you've the patience to stick with it a reasonable one. —**K.A.**

From: MICRO POWER
Format: cassette **Price:** £6.95
Graphics: K
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: KK

SWAG K

BBC

Games seem to fall out of Micro Power like the hair from a fallout victim. No sooner do the last lot get shovelled out the door than a new lot fall through the ceiling.

Swag, latest of the new lot, is a two-player game where the noble and very macho art of burglary is given a bad name by two small characters parading around in black masks and striped jerseys.

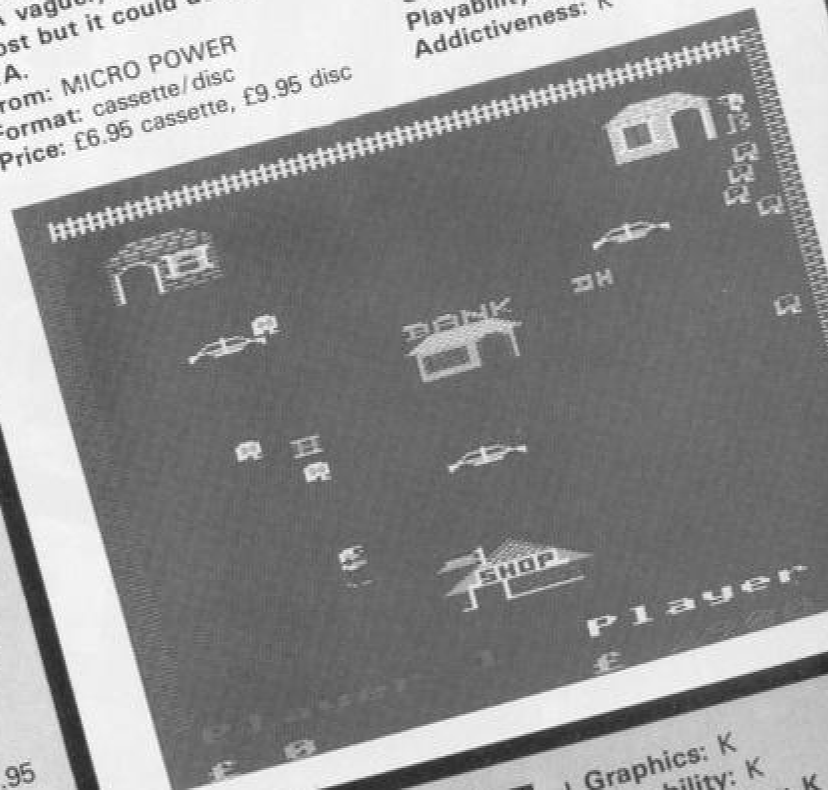
On the screen is a lot of black, three police cars, two houses, a shop, a bank and a smattering of droids. The idea is for each player to run off with £250,000 before his opponent. That's the easy bit. The hard bits are coping with the droids and translating the mistakes in the instructions: More ammunition is given for depositing 'God' in the bank and chasing police cars can be lost by drinking a can of 'bear' — the one that rips apart the livers the others can't reach?

The droids are called Percys and Henrys. Percys chase one player, Henrys chase the other, but they can be converted by shooting them. If the wrong one touches a player he gets sent back to his house minus any goodies he's carrying. The same thing applies if you get shot by your opponent or if he runs over certain things on the screen and the winner is the first one to get the ¼ mile back to his house.

A vaguely interesting game, worse than some, better than most but it could do with some more interesting graphics. — **K.A.**

From: MICRO POWER
Format: cassette/disc
Price: £6.95 cassette, £9.95 disc

Graphics: K
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: K



Graphics: K
Playability: K
Addictiveness: K

TRIO Spectrum 48K K

Trio is a collection of three programs starting with *Dracula's Castle* which consists of running around a maze turning on lights while avoiding bats. In order to kill bats you have to eat garlic.

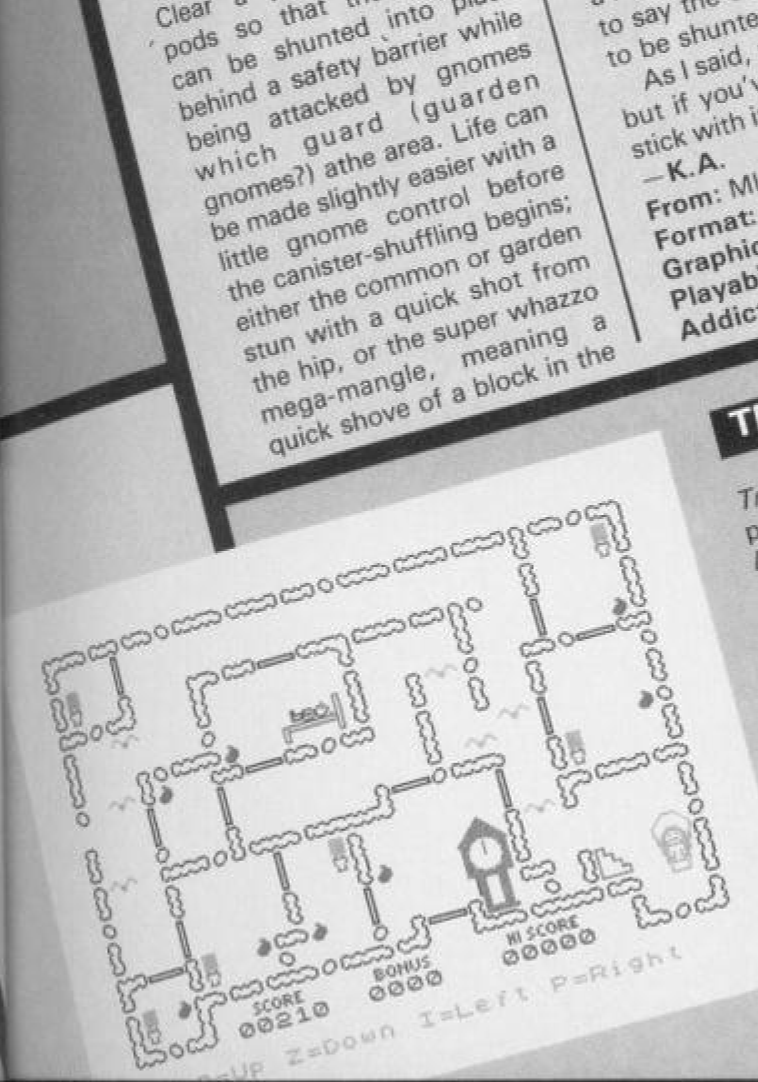
You are under a constant time limit which can be seen on a grandfather clock at the bottom of the screen. When your time runs out Dracula will awake and tour the castle looking for you.

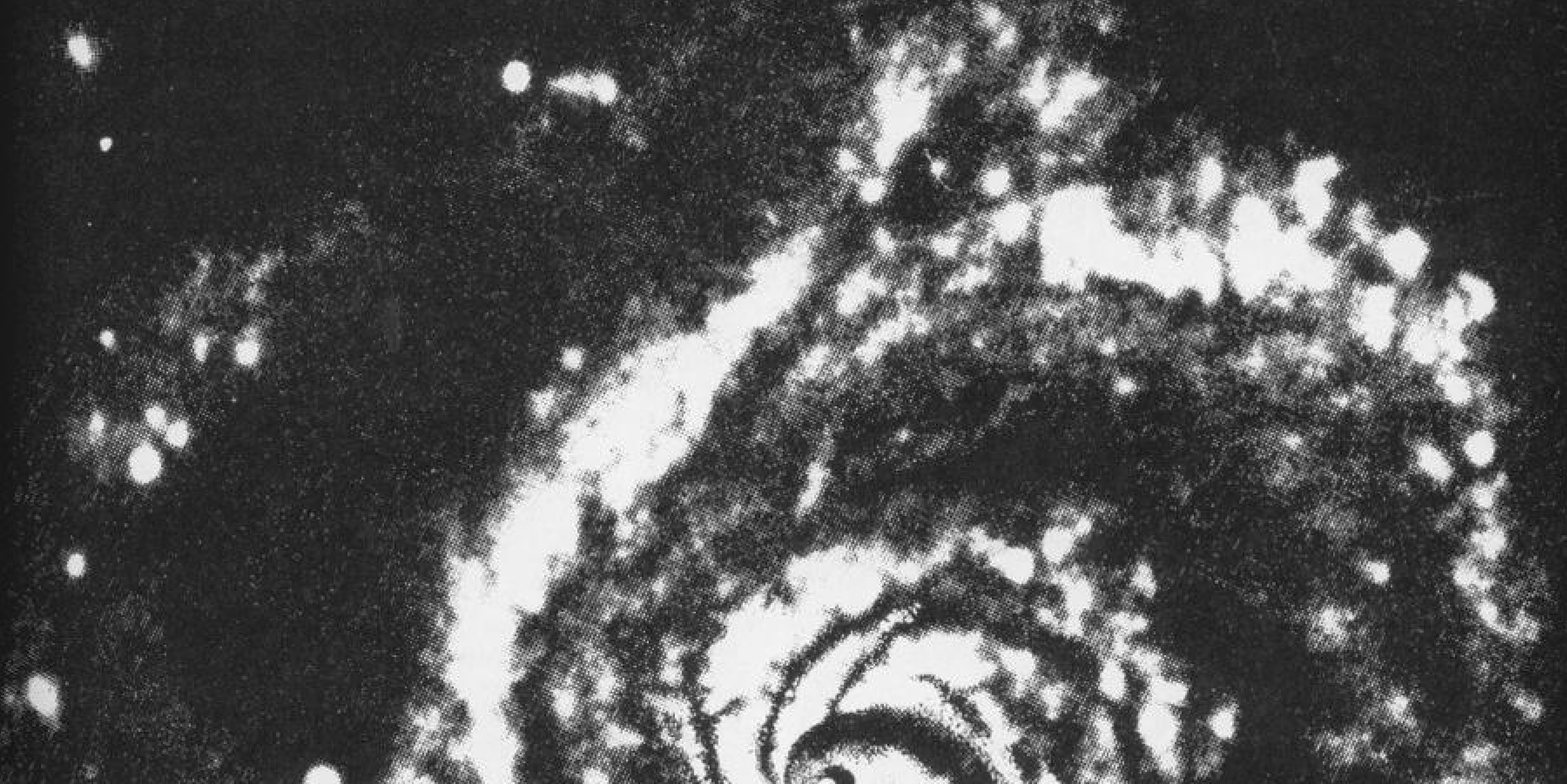
Ascot is a gambling game based on horse racing. You have a choece of betting on a win, place or each way after which the race will commence. Not a very original game but probably the best of the three.

Next is *Chaotic Caverns* which is a cheap version of Amadar where you go around a maze leaving a trail behind you. After clearing the maze you progress to the next level, basically the same thing with a different maze.

All three of these games look like type-in games. This is one time I would save my money. —**S.C.**

From: SILICON JOY
Format: cassette
Price: £5.95





RACE

MOVI SOFT 2

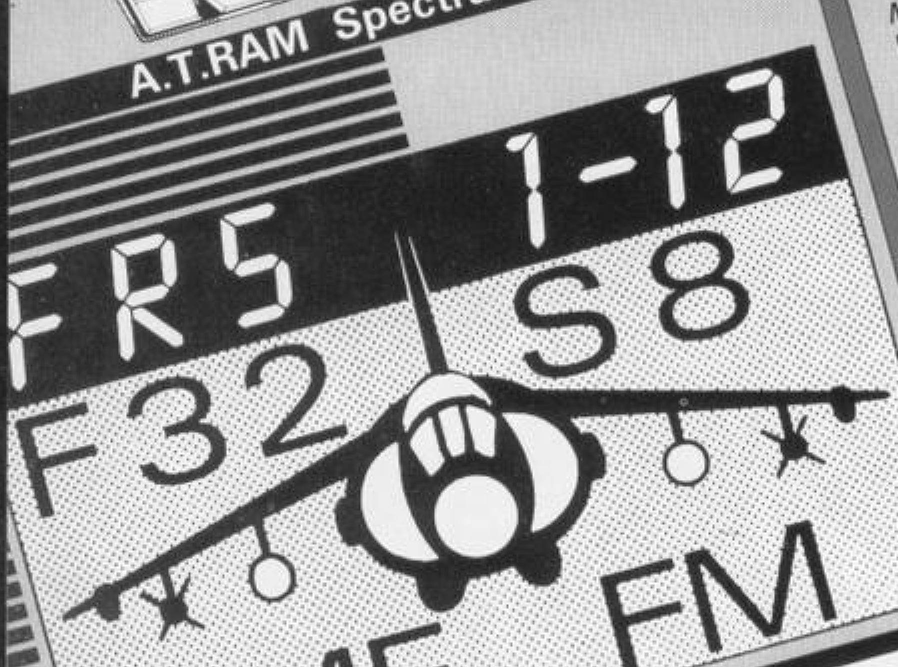
A.T.RAM Spectrum 48K K

'The first in a series of unique computer-aided board games'. Well, that sounds interesting enough. Computer moderation, in a rather amateurish way, has been raising its head among role-playing game players for some time, but, as far as I know, this is the first commercial application. The idea is that you tell the computer what's happening on the board and the computer does the book-keeping and figures out the results. A.T.RAM stands for *Advanced Tactical Reconnaisance & Attack Mission*, and this game pits a Royal Navy Task Force against the US Marine Corps detachment in a military exercise. Both sides have Harriers, with different specs, carriers, missile batteries and air tankers. Players set their ends of the board up secretly and try and knock out strategic targets.

The magnetic board components are very heavy duty, the computer display is packed with info, and if the subject matter appeals you'll find this a complex and demanding game. However, leaving aside the fact that modern air war has never really held much appeal for me in gaming terms, my impression is that A.T.RAM combines many of the disadvantages of advanced board games with few, if any, of their assets. The information entry is, to begin with at least, extremely difficult, requiring much reference to the Operations Manual, while the board doesn't, on the face of it, seem to offer much in the way of variety for the future.

I can see a big future for computer moderation along the general lines of this game, but only if it helps the players, relieving them of the drudgery and letting them get on with the brainwork, which A.T.RAM fails to do. I think the designers would have been better off starting with a known wargame concept, the Battle of Waterloo say, rather plunging themselves and us in at the deep end. Over-ambitious and pointing in the wrong direction. **J.C**

From: ATRAM
Format: cassette/b
Price: £14.95
Graphics: K
Playability: K
Addictiveness: Mach 0



FIGHTER PILOT K K K
CBM 64

At last Digital Integration's award winning *Fighter Pilot* has been converted for the 64. For those of you that have been keeping your head in the shade, *Fighter Pilot* is a superb simulator where you take the controls of a F15 Eagle air superiority fighter.

In this air-to-air combat game the object is to defend your four airfields from attacking aircraft above. When you have taken off you then have to find your enemy's location using radar and flight computer. Having done this the dogfight begins with the enemy manoeuvring to gain advantage. When you have been damaged this is indicated by a colour change on the aircraft's symbol on your radar. You then have the option to continue fighting or land for repairs. All this is shown in excellent 3D graphic animation.

The only difference I could find with the Commodore version is that it is much more controllable than the Spectrum's, and has slightly better sound. Otherwise both versions are identical in every way. — **S.C.**

From: DIGITAL INTEGRATION
Format: cassette
Price: £7.95
Graphics: KKK
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KKK

Four Minutes To Zero Ice Station Zero In Search Of Angels Quann Tulla Faerie Cuddles K K K

Pure text adventures seem to be becoming a threatened species of late. There seems to be a general feeling that to sell, a program has to contain graphics. Doesn't matter how tacky, how irrelevant to the plot line, how much memory is wasted, we gotta have them pictures. A good counter to what I, for one, see as a pernicious trend is this collection of six pocket-money programs from 8th Day, a new Merseyside outfit.

The packaging is understandably minimal, a plain black wrapper in every case, although you do get a natty plastic rack if you purchase all six. There's nothing cut-price about the quality however. As far as I could see, each of these is a well-thought out, properly plotted adventure. Better still, every one is on a different theme. The nearest to the hackneyed old Sword-and-Sorcery shlock is *Faerie*, but this rests more on Celtic whimsy than conquering barbarians. The vital thing is to keep the fairies happy, one way being to swap a human baby for their changeling, a bit naughty this.

Four Minutes to Midnight seems to be the most advanced program, and pits you against a post-catastrophe world. The object is to rebuild civilisation from the ruins by assembling a team of capable and technically-skilled people. To my mind this goes one better than *The Hobbit* in terms of human interaction, and displays genuine originality. *Cuddles* is a bit on the cute side — you are a bored toddler and you have to escape from your cot and get past nanny to sample the delights of the outside world.

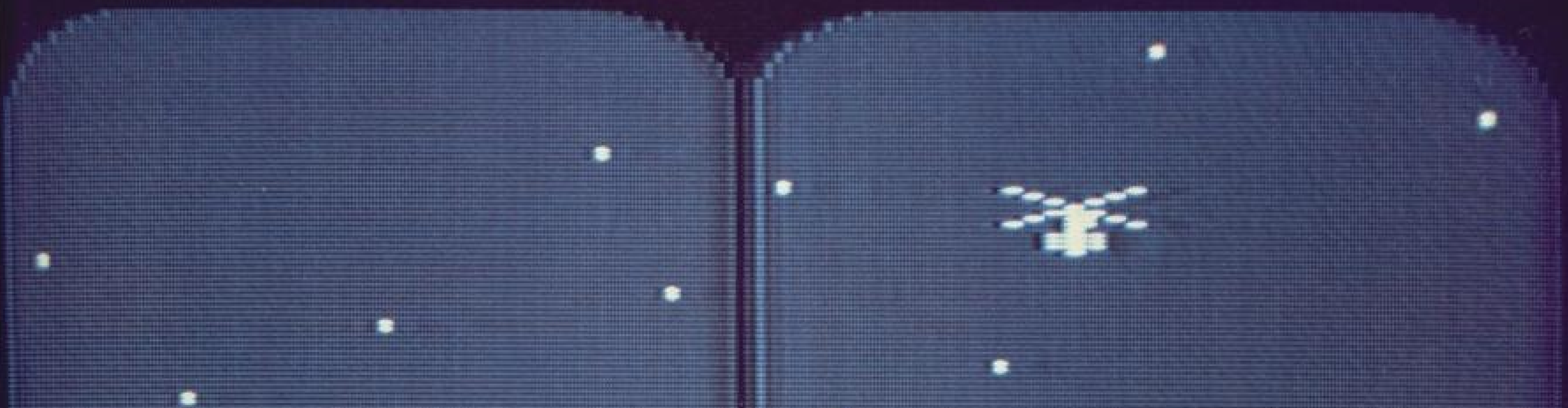
Ice Station Zero owes something to the dreadful Alistair Maclean story — for Zero read Zebra — it's a thriller set on the Arctic Icepack. The obligatory space adventure is represented in the form of *Quann Tulla* in which you have to get a crippled starship working again. *In Search of Angels* is a Fleming-style spy story full of the obligatory souped-up sportsters full of gadgetry.

A lot of ground has been covered here, all six packages taken together cost the same as two normally-priced Spectrum programs, but represent months of playing time. This is the first time I've encountered software at a reasonable price which sacrifices almost nothing in the way of quality. Surely this, and not peculiar security devices, is the answer to piracy? — **F.F.**

THE ANSWER TO PIRACY? — F.F.

From: 8th DAY SOFTWARE
Format: cassette
Price: £1.99 each
Graphics: N/A
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KKK

You'd better get the hang of this. One day you might be up here for real.



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K K

ASSIGNMENT EAST BERLIN Spectrum 48K

BERLIN GAME

Atmospheric secret agent text adventure with many good points and one major irritant. As Magnus Steele, the Ice-Man, you start from Checkpoint Charlie and roam the desolate ill-lit streets of East Berlin in search of seven items.

There are 70-plus locations of which about half are significant and a few extremely hazardous. The polizei rumble you early on and come looking, sirens blaring, with orders to shoot on sight.

Between avoiding them, some combinations of which are extra-valuable, the pressure is really on. If you don't complete within a time limit, the program self-destructs!

An excellent, pacey and gripping game, but where has programmer Reg Beale been these last few years? Apart from a handful of basic commands, you have to type in whole words, 'examine' rather than 'exam', 'briefcase' rather than 'brie' and so on which will annoy seasoned adventurers who type in the first four letters as a matter of course, and is especially aggravating on a Spectrum non-plus. Another oddity is that if there's an adjective, 'old', 'small', 'long' or whatever, that's what the program recognises, rather than the item described. Scores high on imagination, low on technique. — **J.C.**

From: STERLING
Format: cassette
Price: £5.95
Graphics: N/A
Playability: K
Addictiveness: KKK



K

WARP BBC/Electron

Outside — a dramatic cover featuring Spock with two torches stuck in his eyes. Inside — a rather boring game with a lot of numbers and very little action.

It's a version of the old *Star Trek*-game where you pick a space quadrant, fly to it, shoot Klingons if they're there (or sit and ponder the Meaning of Life and a helluva lot of stars if they're not). The level of excitement is well maintained by making sure you know well in advance if anything in the slightest bit unexpected is about to happen.

On a list of useless ways of passing the time of day this sits nicely between counting hairs on a carpet and spending three weeks in a broom cupboard. The game opens with a grid of numbers in the top half of the screen, a plan view of the Starship Enterprise at bottom right and, bottom left, a view of lots of stars and a blue and green blob with another Enterprise stuck on it like a Green Shield stamp.

Each of the squares represents a sector of space, the numbers in each square representing the number of Klingons in that sector and the idea is to wipe out all the Klingons in the grid. This in itself is a laughable operaion; on warping into a sector you activate phasers and position a set of sights over a Klingon. Once you've taken a shot at him he takes a shot at you, during which time you can't fire, after which you take a shot at him. The effect is like a pair of halfwit boxers with their feet nailed to the floor, taking turns to hit each other until one finally falls to the floor a miss of blood and crushed bones.

This ridiculous procedure is repeated, broken only by brief visits to space stations for refuelling, until all the Klingons have been obliterated. Then, guess what...another grid, followed by another, a tota of six in all. When all six ar cleared you have to po around the sectors until y find the missing captain, sole reason for all this.

This is a boring ga
—**K.A.**

From: ICON
Format: cassette
Price: £7.95
Graphics: K
Playability: K
Addictiveness: No

K

BARROWQUEST Spectrum 48K

GOING UNDERGROUND

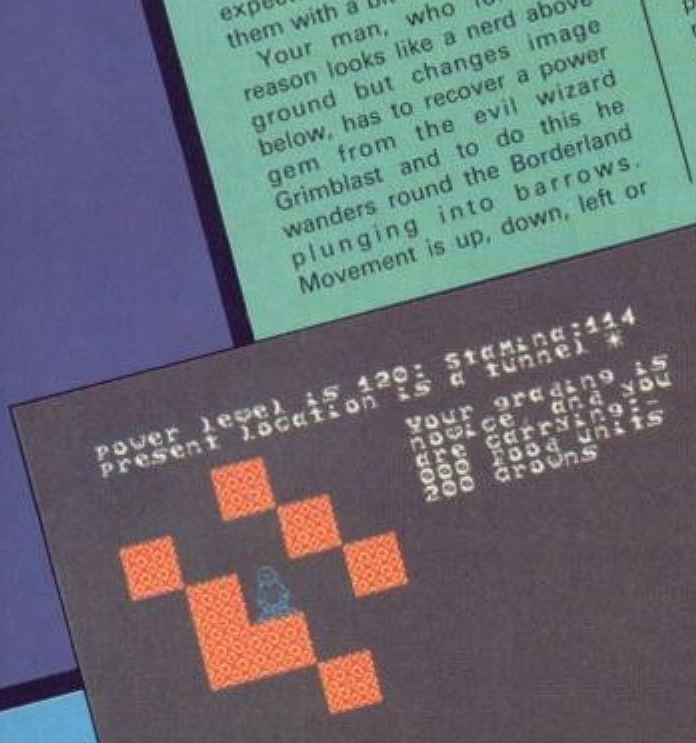
Any adventure game that bears the name J. Sherry, author of CCS's marvellous multi-player interactive *The Prince*, raises immediate interest and expectation. This one drops them with a bit of a thud.

Your man, who for some reason looks like a nerd above ground but changes image below, has to recover a power gem from the evil wizard Grimblast and to do this he wanders round the Borderland plunging into barrows. Movement is up, down, left or right on the keyboard and, if you have a Spectrum+, you'll find that you need the 5-8 keys, not the arrows, which is irritating.

The screen is a 5×5 square grid representing 0.025% of the playing area which means a lot of exploring and, unless you're a very patient mapper, very little planning. You start with a power rating, which can increase; stamina, which goes down steadily; gold, which you use to buy food, and food which eaten periodically ups your stamina.

Along the way you can acquire swords, shields and so on. The nasties also have power ratings so, when attacked, you have to make a split second decision whether to fight or run. Once down a barrow you explore the tunnels, which can be very, very long dead ends, like places to run out of stamina and die. The landscaping consists of deadly dull boxes and the mechanics are tedious plodding, not very well explained (you're not told how to pick up food, for example). Feels like a bit of a rush job. — **J.C.**

From: CCS
Format: cassette
Price: £5.95
Graphics: K
Playability: K
Addictiveness: KK



KK

THE OPEN

Spectrum 48K

SEVVY SAVVY

Another of CCS's amazingly elaborate simulations, this time golf. You get a different Open course — Carnoustie and Turnberry — on each side of the tape. Decide the wind direction and force, choose whether to play championship, single or practice rounds and the starting hole. Then the real decision-making begins — which club to use, the direction and force of the stroke and finally, most difficult of all, the timing of it. Not knowing the first thing about the game, I failed dismally at this stage, alternately hooking and slicing. The odd balls I did connect with invariably went wrong and by the time I called it a day, totally exhausted, I must have set a new high (or do I mean low?) for the course.

Can't say I'm crazy about the graphics which are no more than adequate — a pity, given such a potentially promising subject as golf courses — but there's no arguing with the depth and subtlety of the mechanics.

The inlay provides nice and clear, if rather daunting, charts of the maximum distances for each of the 10 available clubs, both from tee and fairway, plus wind factors, and of the effects of hazards. I don't know how many golfers own Spectrums but *The Open* looks like the perfect thing for rained-out or laid-up fanatics. — **J.C.**

From: CCS
Format: cassette
Price: £5.95
Graphics: K
Playability: Bogey
Addictiveness: Birdie



KKK

SUPERPOWER

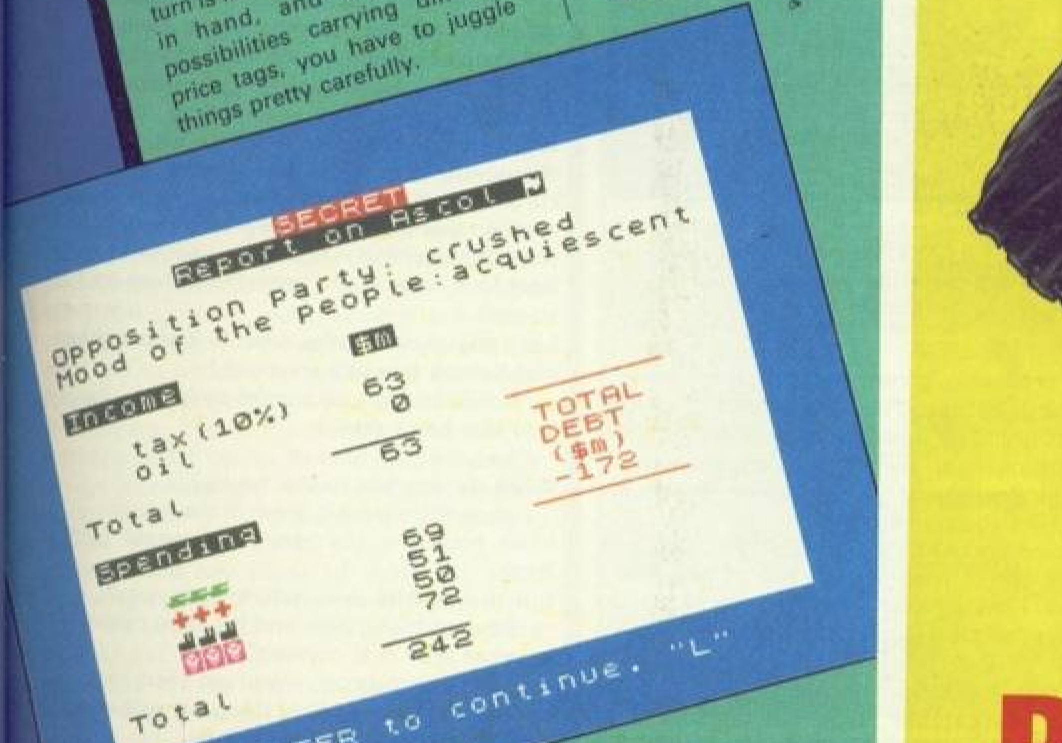
Spectrum 48K

A real mega-game from CCS, combing aspects of both *Insurgency* — their two-player government vs. guerrillas strategy game — and *The Prince*, their multi-player interactive adventure. Up to six players meddle in the affairs of nine small Central America-ish countries, grasping for profits. Each country has a mass of differentiating parameters and players have dozens of possible options from the information and decision menus. The number of things you can do in a turn is limited only by your cash in hand, and with various possibilities carrying different price tags, you have to juggle things pretty carefully.

The main problem, helped by a printer option, is to keep track of the sheer volume of changing information which, though very well laid out, can't be held simply in the head and isn't available just on demand.

My admiration for this very complex, well thought out and demanding game is tempered only by an annoying glitch in the loading — you're not told to stop the tape during the game options selection, though you are told to start it again afterwards. Still, if you want a game that gives you plenty to do and think about, *Superpower* plus reams of notepaper will keep you busy. — **J.C.**

From: CCS
Format: cassette
Price: £5.95
Graphics: KKK
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KK





Goa

JEFF "Animal" MINTER is by any standards a Name of Power in the games designing field. Hit after hit has poured from his keyboard — latterly with a decidedly zoological theme. Camels, dromedaries, sheep, llamas — there's no end to Minter's creative obsession. And seemingly no end to the hits, either. TONY TAKOUSHI talks to the Oldest Hippie of All . . .

Can you tell us a little bit about your new game?

It's called *Mama Llama.*

What does it involve? And will you be following Tony Crowther's example of a smooth-scrolling game?

Well, not so slavishly. It's going to be a strange game . . .

Why ARE your games so strange?

Probably because I'm so weird! I've had some superb music especially written for the game by James Lisney (the Baughurst piano wizard).

That sounds like hype . . .

Well, it sounds like hype, yes — but I won't be selling it on the strength of the music. I'm not going to be mentioning it in the adverts and I'm not going to say, Hey, this has got eight billion screens!, I'm not going to do that.

Why did you mention eight billion screens!

Because of the current 'mega-game' trend, I can translate these terms. For 'mega-game' read 'game with lots of screens' and for 'cartoon style animation' read 'sprites with little lines around them'. They are fashionable things; everybody is bringing out games with loads of playing area but never mind if they don't play well.

Does that matter at the end of the day? Technically they are doing what they set out to do. What does it matter if cartoon-style graphics are two sprites?

A game as a whole is not sold on the basis of graphics but some companies do take this line. A game is a synergistic combination of many parts — graphics are just one part of it — they can be used as part of a style.

You yourself have a style of using sheep and llamas . . .

That's exactly it. What I dislike at the moment in the industry are ads that say, This game is better than *Jet Set Willy*, or This game is the best. You can't say 'the best' anymore. We've all reached a certain technical level.

What do you mean *THE BEST?* Because it's subjective, everybody has their own tastes.

All the programmers have reached a standard where they can produce games that look nice and are 'polished', but the thing is you can't say your game is any better than someone else's because people who like my games might not like someone else's games and vice versa. I write games for people who like my style; if people don't like my style I'm not that bothered.

Aren't you producing games to make a living?



"You can't say 'The Best' anymore . . . we've all reached a certain technical level"

I'm producing games because that's what I like doing, because I'm a video games artiste. I get lots of letters from people saying they really like *Ancipital*, or they didnt like *Ancipital* as much as *Revenge*. I like to hear what people like and dislike about my games.

On Compunet I get a big kick from putting up a game called *Synchro* and have people take it for free. I really enjoyed writing it, there was no pressure to produce a particularly marketable game.

Aren't you creating your own pressure by saying 'marketable', Why not do your own thing, why worry about it?

Well thats what I do now, but at the moment there's so much heavy commercialism in the whole scene that it does tend to leak over no matter how much I try and negate it. Perhaps I should take a course in Zen and meditation!

What's the response been like to *Ancipital?*

The people who have bought it like it a lot, there haven't been any letters saying it's disliked. In fact there's been loads and loads of letters saying *Ancipital* is driving people crazy. They love it.

Again, like most my games it tends to suffer at the hands of casual reviewers.

What do you mean by casual reviewers?

Guys who are given thirty tapes to review in an afternoon, so they try and play each game in five minutes — and for one of my games that's a pretty damn stupid way to try and play.

By your own admission a lot of your games are shoot-'em-ups so why shouldn't they be able to review it in five minutes?

Well, look at *Ancipital.* It's a shoot-'em-up but with that bit more. Stuff like *Matrix* and Grindrunner admittedly could be reviewed in five minutes, but take *Revenge.* If you played it for five minutes you'd only see the first two or three screens, out of a total of 42. Some reviewers of *Ancipital* don't even bother to read the instructions, they don't know what they're doing. The first time Help screens have been introduced into an arcade game and they don't mention them! I saw a review where it said there were 81 screens in *Ancipital* . . . where it says at least four times in the instructions there are 100 screens.

Let's move on a little, what is it about sheep and llamas you like so much?

I like them because they're so hairy.

You like hairy things . . .?

Plenty to grab hold of . . .

What do you see in the future?,

I hope there's a big crash in the market . . . I really hope the big heavy commercial outfits crash.

But they're the ones taking over now?

They are taking over and it's all so cynical.

In what way is it corrupt?

There is corruption — you get chart hyping.

Isn't it a relatively new thing for software?

It is, it's all going the wrong way.

So it's a young industry that's going full circle like the video and record industries?

It's not even like the record industry. People aren't being encouraged to develop their own

atbuster

> "Distributors don't buy a game if it's original — they buy games with lots of hype. That's bad news."

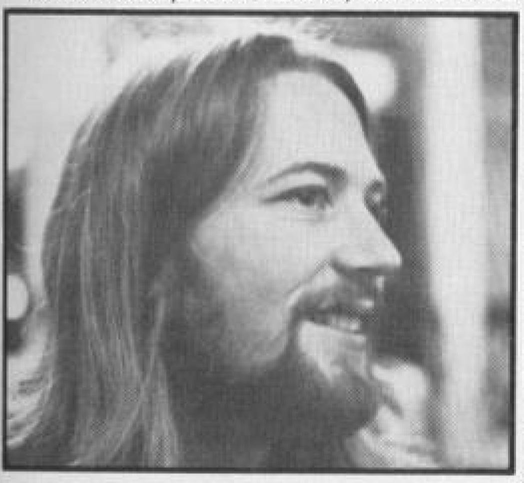
styles. The distributors buy a certain type of game — a game with pretty graphics and backed by full page colour ads. They don't look to see if a game is different or original. They buy games with a lot of hype behind them, and programmers with really good games may not be able to get their games sold. That is bad news when a distributor can lock you out like that. I have had the same trouble with *Ancipital*. The distributors have gone for something else — they haven't even looked at *Ancipital*.

How can you be sure they haven't seen it?

Because they would have bought it!

That's a very complacent attitude.

OK it's a complacent attitude, but it's not a



"Some reviewers don't even bother to read instructions . . . they don't know what they're doing"

bad game, it's original and the response I've had from people who bought it is that they've loved it. So what the hell more do they want?

Have you not spoken to the distributors over the problem. Why aren't they buying it?

It's like talking to a brick wall. They go on about marketing — what it comes down to basically is that they buy stuff with hype behind it.

So they're saying to you take 'X' number of colour page ads and we'll buy the game off you?

They're not saying that, but just look at the games they're buying! US Gold and Ocean! Ocean have something like 16 pages of colour ads in the computer press. Look at any Ocean game and compare it to some of mine and you can't say it's better. I've got one of the largest followings of people who like my style of game in the country, I've worked hard to develop a following and I like to think I satisfy them. It annoys me when these guys can't get hold of my games because it gives the pirates a chance to step in.

Do you have any plans to write for other machines such as Amstrad or MSX?

We will probably be doing some conversions for MSX and Amstrad.

So you're talking conversions rather than writing new games?

I personally wouldn't write on the Amstrad.

Why — no sprites?

I don't think I could give it my best, I'd be writing in Z80 on a machine that was totally bit-mapped.

Again — no sprites.

It's not so much that I can't use machines without any sprites, because I use the VIC quite well. I'm now used to the style of development using sprites, and I think I write better games with a sprite-based machine.

You passionately believe in games — it's not just a job for you?

Oh no, it's not really a job at all, it's something I would be doing anyway if I had a 'normal' job.

I've spoken to many people throughout the industry and I've mentioned Jeff Minter and they've said Jeff isn't well liked. I personally have said to them it's because you have such strong beliefs on games and gaming styles. Do you think that's the reason why people tend to switch off when one says Jeff Minter and Llamasoft?

Well maybe. I'm just apart from the rest of the industry. I'm not doing what they're doing.

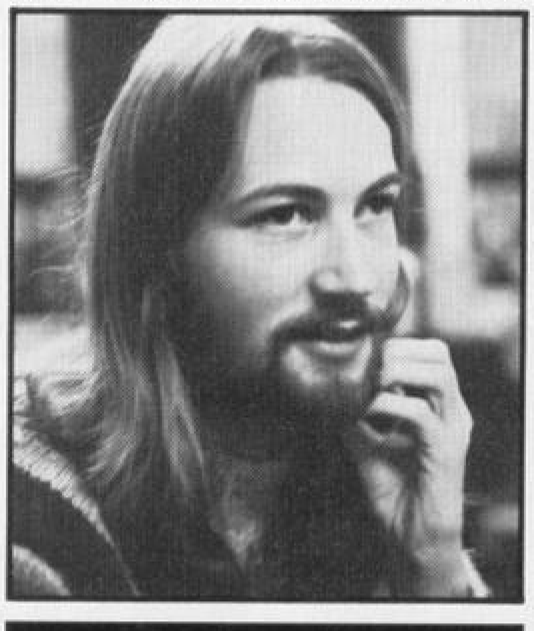
Which is . . .?

Look, the main reason these guys have formed a software house is to make a lot of money. Every other software house is run by people who aren't really games hackers at heart and they don't get a kick out of designing video games.

They're just in it for the money?

To different levels. — Someone like Taskset is different because those guys like games and enjoy designing. What I see is that no other software house barring Taskset is developing a style of their own.

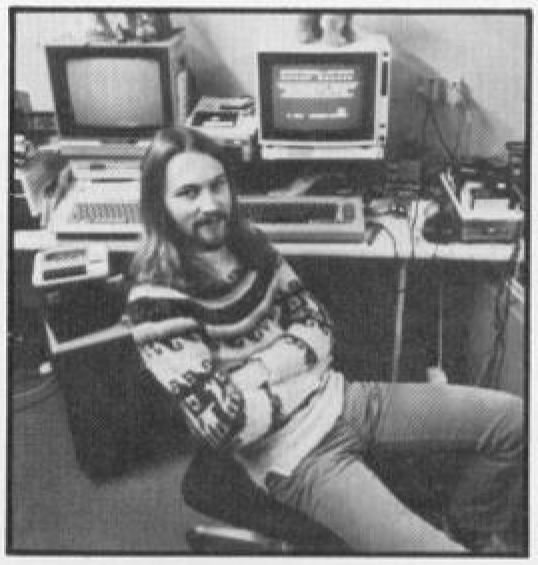
I tend to be a little more experimental — I do games because I like to do *that* game. People



"I've always been into Pink Floyd and that sort of thing. It's the way I'm most relaxed"

who like my games tend to be very passionately into them or don't like them at all — there's very little middle ground.

I don't release a lot of titles because it's very cynical just to flood the market.



"I like Taskset — their stuff is witty and pretty original. Activision's is nicely done with good ideas — the games are simple and enjoyable to play"

You don't plan to release a game very two or three weeks?

No! Say somebody likes my games and suddenly I start producing three games a month — how's the poor kid going to be able to buy all these games?

So you're talking quality. A game can be produced to a far higher standard over two or three months . . .

I'm not a particularly fast coder — I like to tinker around with the stuff.

What do you say to people like Tony Crowther who knock out a game in two weeks?

Well I think he's a talented programmer, but I can't say I'm enthralled with his stuff. It's good, it's very competently coded, but there's nothing very original there. *Loco* was an arcade game then there was *Son of Blagger*, a scrolling *Manic Miner*, then *Potty Pigeon, Monty Mole* and *Suicide Express* — all of which are variations on the smooth scroll theme.

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Goatbuster

Who else do you like in the industry?

Of the English lot . . . very few. I like Taskset because their stuff is witty and pretty original. I play some of the Activision stuff — it's very nicely done with good ideas — the games are simple but enjoyable. *HERO* and *Toy Bizarre* especially. *Pitfall 2* is a great game on the VCS. I've always respected Activision from early days when I owned a VCS; they bought out *Activision Tennis* which is about two-thirds as good as Psion's version, but it was written in 2K!

Why did you call your company Llamasoft?

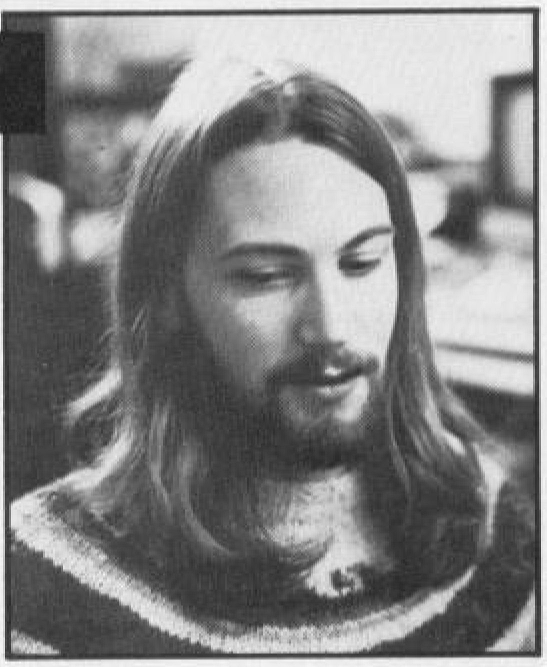
I'd always been notorious at school for being into camels, and llamas were a natural progression, being camel-related. I read about them in a book when I was at sixth form. I knew they existed but I saw pictures of them and though, 'Wow, these beasts are really nice'.

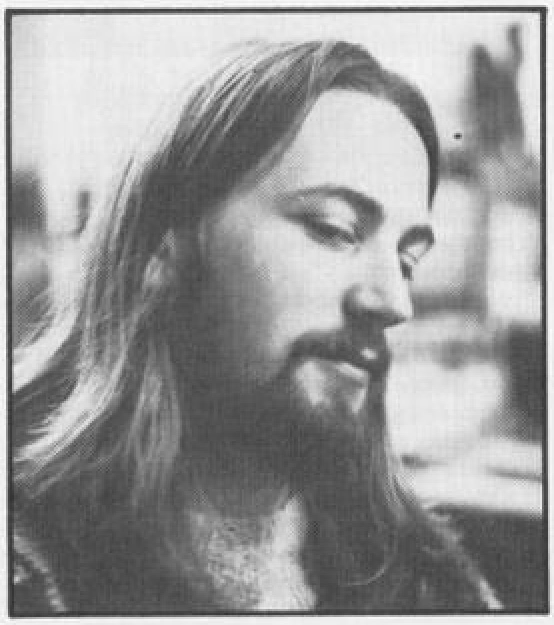
Why the old-hippy style? Why the beard and long hair?

It's just the way I am, really. I've always been into Pink Floyd and that sort of thing. It's the way I'm most relaxed.. I'm not doing it for publicity as some cynical people would say.

But you do get a lot of publicity — you have a high profile in the industry!

It's nice, but I don't go out there looking for it!.





'There are times when I feel like quitting, but I'll always be writing games'.

What about Interceptor Micros? In a lot of their recent games they've been openly courting you by using characters like Jeff the Jippy Jester and Llamaburgers in their games.

That's their bad trip, not mine. For some reason they dislike me. I haven't upset them knowingly. I actually thought Interceptor were looking up to me when they released *Siren City*. It wasn't brilliantly programmed but it was an original concept. I thought they had got their act together — when they suddenly started doing *Manic Miner* stuff and more arcade clones. But a lot of companies do clones — they're no worse than anyone else over cloning.

Are you getting to the stage where you want to drop everything and go away and forget it?

Yes, There are times when I feel I like quitting. But I would always be writing games anyway. I'm going to carry on writing games but I'm not going to mind if they don't get into this week's mega-funky top thirty! In the early days charts were OK because they were put together by guys who ran computer shops, like the one in the VIC centre where the guys would show you all the games. It was representative then, a good game would do well — a bad game would bomb. Nowadays all the charts reflect is, who's got the most efficient marketing organisation or who the distributors have designed to buy from this month. It's just doesn't mean anything.

What games would you personally take to a desert island?

Rescue on Fractalus! Star Raiders, obviously, probably *Elite* when I want a more intellectual version of *Star Raiders*. *Elite* is a thinking man's *Star Raiders*.

Should we ban the bomb?

Yes, we certainly should!

Are you in favour of the Greenham Women?

Yes. They're doing an important job down there, while other people down there are playing at soldiers.

There is a distinct lack of men though. Do you think men should go down and give them support?

If they want to make a feminist point at the same time that doesn't really bother me because they're making a very important point about cruise missiles in the first place. The feminist issue is their trip — I'm not exactly a sexist bloke.

Now you mention it, which do you prefer — male or female llamas?

Female ones of course! What do you take me for?

The ORIGIN of the SPECIES

by JEFF MINTER

For the first time anywhere in BIG K, the rock-'em sock-'em official history of Llamasoft from the Hairy One himself!

FIRST CONTACT with a micro 1978 as far as I can remember, a 6th Form. It was an 8K PET with the calculator keyboard. Taught myself BASIC, wrote games, found out games needed speed, taught myself machine language.

Left 6th Form, went to university in Norwich armed only with a ZX80 I'd saved fo six months to buy and an old TV I'd got for a fiver. While I was there I (a) bought an Atari VCS (b) did a little illicit hacking o the resident VAX mainframe, (c got caught and hammered fo the aforementioned hacking, (d spent quite a little time on the biology lab's Apple systems which were my first experience of the Disc Drive (may its Name be eternally praised). Eventually (e) got kicked out 'cos I wa supposed to be doing math and physics. My pleas to b allowed to transfer t computing fell upon deaf ear (at least I *think* he was deaf)..

Got back, obtained a ZX8 (wow!), started going to Oxfor Poly. Wrote some ZX81 game which were sold by DKTronics Designed their graphics ROM (note two little llamas an initials 'JM' therein testify t the design) and wrote machin code versions of *Centipede* an *Space invaders* using said ROM Got very nasty virus infection quite ill for three months, had t leave Poly. Got hold of VIC-20 Wrote tape of ten little game for DKTronics. (There's collectors' item for anyone wh still has one!) Had disagreemen with DKTronics over ZX8 graphics ROM. Decided to g *solo!*

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Bought M/C Monitor for VIC! Bought 16K Expansion and Motherhead for VIC!! Teamed up with R.P. Jones who was to help me with the venture. Wrote *Defenda* painfully slowly. Went to VIC show in '82 and people actually *bought Defenda* (wow!) Met guy from American software house HES and did deal to ROM *Defenda* (we called it *Aggressor*). Wrote game called *Ratman*. None too thrilled with it but launched it anyway. Wrote *Traxx*. Much better! Well pleased with it. Had argument with Jones. Decided it would be best if we each followed our own destinies. Did PCW Show in September '82, last ever show with RPJ. Show finished, we went home RPJ reclaimed the stuff he'd lent me, we were alone. Solo. No hassles.

Sat down for a week, wrote a little thing called *Gridrunner*...

BLAM!! Phone call from the States at two in the morning, they're going crazy, been playing it six hours solid, can I code it for the 64? Write *Grid* for the 64. Can I code it for Atari? In two weeks? On ROM? Go out, buy Atari, buy *De Re Atari* book, buy disc drive, borrow mate's assembler editor. Write *Grid* again. Then write *Attack of the Mutant Camels* for the 64, then *Laser Zone* for the VIC — and therein lie the best sonics I've ever made — then go on holiday for a week 'cos I'm nearly burned out. Come back, go to the States to show in San Francisco, listen to Rock Radio station KMEL 106FM, the Beast of the Bay. (So *that's* where 106 comes from, okay?) Return. Write *Matrix* for VIC and 64. Write *Laser Zone* for 64. Go to show in Chicago, see an arcade game called *Chameleon* which HES had to rights to but never programmed. It was ace. Come back. Enlist the services of the Banghurst Piano Wizard to write *Hover Bovver*. Also write *Metagalactic Llamas* for the VIC. Launch *HB* and *Metagalactic* at PCW. Go home, write *Revenge*, launch at YC Xmas Show. Go ski-ing. Come back, write *Hell Gate* for VIC and 64. Write *Sheep in Space* and listen to Jethro Tull's *Broadsword and the Beast* a lot. Go to San Francisco again. Argue with HES because they won't take *Revenge*. They assure me that their marketing people know exactly what's right for the USA. I attempt to prove them wrong and draw large and enthusiastic crowds when I demo *Revenge* at the show. HES ignore the evidence!

I listen to KMEL 106FM some more, then fly home. People finally stop telling me to get my hair cut.

Demo *Sheep* at Radio 1 show in Birmingham, let the players turn up a couple of bugs, fix these and launch *Sheep*. Read *De Re Atari* again and decide that you could do some fancy things with it if you wanted to. Learn the Atari. Write *AMC* for the Atari. Mate of mine transfers *Meta* to the 64. He comes down for a while, he codes *Hover Bovver* onto the Atari and I sit and write *Ancipital*. HES go bankrupt. I demo *Ancipital* at D&D Show in London, people like it. Finish off *Ancipital* and launch at PCW Show. Notice that people are getting heavily into my newsletter!

Go to Peru and have amazing experiences with llamas.

Come back with idea for *Mama Llama*. Drink last of my Inca Kola. Start coding. Tony Takoushi comes down and does idiot interview for BIG K. Stay at home coding and miss party. Finish backgrounds. Write this. Finish, go to bed. Try to stop thinking of goats. Go to sleep, zzzzzzzzzz...

ONE HUMP OR TWO...?



AN OVERVIEW OF LLAMASOFT'S SHEEPOID SOFTWARE

BY BILL BENNETT

JEFF MINTER'S psychedelic programs are to the eighties what Marc Bolan's songs were to the early seventies; weird, wonderful, and above all else, fun. For *Metal Guru* read *Mutant Camel*, for *Telegram Sam* read *Sheep in Space*. Minter could be a junior electronic pixie; however he describes himself alternatively as "Animal" Minter or "Yak the Hairy", names which could live on as long as Ziggy Stardust.

References to the early seventies are no accident. In many ways Jeff lives in a hippy timewarp. With afghan coats, long hair and desert boots, "Yak the Hairy" looks as if he has just stepped off the Marrakesh Express. He could be a guest at Neil's (Young Ones) party. But make no mistake, his work marks him out as a true child of the micro-revolution.

Arcade acolytes eagerly await the next software sensation from Minter's Llamasoft llabel, in the same way that schoolgirls queue for Duran Duran videos and Poles queue for meat. Each of the carefully crafted kilobyte confections is played, zapped and inwardly digested by fanatics who want nothing more than "a good heavy blast, the way Jeff writes 'em". His cult following can be attributed to a number of special characteristics. But the most important factor is that Jeff cares about his games. He plays them himself, and he plays other people's games too. Because he is a compulsive game player, he knows how to get the adrenalin flowing. The fact that he is totally out-to-lunch helps, as does the *Star Wars* cockpit machine he keeps in his room for relaxing between bouts of frantic coding.

To make the games seem plausible, Jeff has dreamt up a megascenario. In short, there is a war on. Earth against the Zzyaxian Empire. I suspect that Jeff has read one science fiction book too many as the nature of this war just doesn't bear thinking about. The main weapon is the Zzyaxian armoury is psychological disorientation, hence the somewhat bizarre nature of the objects that need to be blasted in Llamasoft games. The same motifs keep popping up and zapping you time and time again. Camels, llamas, sheep, half-man half-goat beast and savage guinea pigs inhabit the Llamasoft cosmos. Themes like *pyramids* with winking eyes — shades of the Freemasons keep appearing. Other Minteresque motifs include CND symbols, references to rock bands like Genesis and Pink Floyd and cross-references to other people's software.

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Jeff Minter is also to blame for the hyperinflation of game scores. You will soon get to think nothing of six figure scores in Llamasoft games. To quote from Frankie Goes To Hollywood "When two tribes go to war, one and a half million is all you can score"; In *The Nature of the Beast*, Llamasoft's own freaky fanzine, is a table of high scores for the games. Most of them look like telephone numbers. The fanzine is written by Jeff and produced on an Apple Macintosh using Macwrite and Macpaint. Issue one, sub-titled the "first hairy issue", is fronted by a Macpainted picture of a sheep.

Llamasoft games are mainly for the Commodore 64 and Vic 20. A number of the games are being translated to the Atari machine, generally with better sound and graphics. Sooner or later Llamasoft's first MSX game will be available, probably a version of *Gridrunner*. Certain Llamasoft games are available in Spectrum versions, converted by Salamandar Software and distributed by Quicksilva. All the games work best with joysticks, and can be tough on them. If you get hooked on Llamasoft games be prepared to fork out for a heavy-duty joystick. You also need a lot of energy.

The Games

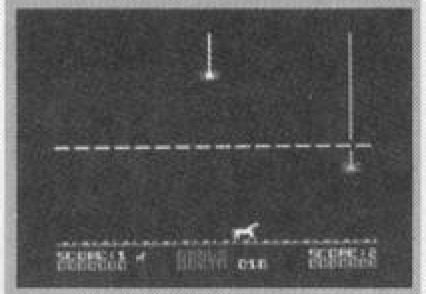
TRAXX

Traxx is a grid game, grids being the earliest Llamasoft craze. The idea is that you must capture squares while avoiding bugs that float about. It is similar in concept to the Atari game *Qix*, though somewhat cruder.

METAGALACTIC LLAMAS BATTLE AT THE EDGE OF TIME

What a mouthful! *Metagalactic Llamas* is certainly not a game to play at the dinner table. Llamas spit, metagalactic llamas spit something pink, totally disgusting, and lethal. Pitched against the salivating llamas are some hellish looking "Zzyaxian cyborg arachnid mutants". Shooting the spiders will earn you points, but hitting the threads they hang on can be risky. When a shot thread snaps, the spider falls to earth, metamorphoses and chases the llama. You can still get to blast at the spiders as they scuttle over good old terra firma, by bouncing your llama's spit off a horizontal force firld controlled by the up and down action of your joystick. In one way part of the game is all about cleaver deflection of . . . ugh, spit.

Unlike later Llamasoft products, *Metagalactic Llamas* does not offer a great range of beasties to zap. But then the original game was written for the memory-poor Vic 20. An improved version of the game runs on the Commodore 64. Spectrum owners will find a version for their machine is available from Salamander Software. Simple though it may be, *Metagalactic Llamas* is an enthralling zap, and in retrospect was a clear indication of weirder things yet to come from the mind of Minter.



GRIDRUNNER

International best-seller, *Gridrunner* is loosely based on the old Atari game, *Centipedes*. Minter's influences are as easy to spot as Marc Bolan's. Instead of taking place at the bottom of a garden, Llamasoft's update of the old classic sets the action in deepest space, so Bill, Ben and Little Weed can take a nap. Once again we are pitted against the evil might of the Zzyaxian Empire. You are in control of a space ship, the Gridrunner, which can move around the lower portin of a big red grid, it sêems that space is full of Them. Your task is to vaporize droids as they hurtle from the top of the screen towards and past you.



So far the game is just like a souped-up version of *Centipedes*. The nasty bits are the X-Y zappers which patrol the fringes of the grid taking pot-shots at you and yours. They fire plasma pulses, which are bad enough, but when two pulses cross, a Pod is formed. Pods can only be destroyed by repeated blasting. After a few minutes of sweaty palms and joystick fatigue, a successful campaign is rewarded with the message, "Grid Zapped". The euphoria is short-lived, as within seconds another wave starts. A total of twenty waves complete the game. In its day *Gridrunner* was a masterpiece; it still plays well today, even if it is a little unsophisticated. Definitely a game for novices to sharpen their claws on.

LASER ZONE

Lazer Zone turns *Gridrunner* on its head. Instead of dodging the X-Y zappers, you are now placed in control of them. Poacher turned gamekeeper. The program makes ingenious use of the joystick. X-Y zappers can move up and down the bottom and right and sides of the grid shooting at the poor wretches that happen to be there. Funny how you can't remember what it felt like. Moving your joystick left to right controls the horizontal zapper, and moving it up and



down controls the vertical one.

Initially the zappers only need to fire straight forwards, out into space. However should the aliens reach one of the sides of the grid, they will crawl towards the zapper in order to destroy it. You can get around this by controlling your zapper to fire a diagonal shot. However you must take care not to blast the other zapper. The key to mastering *Laser Zone* is mastering this diagonal shooting technique.

HOVER BOVVER

Of all the Llamasoft games, *Hover Bovver* stands out as being different. It is a distinctly suburban game, set in a large back garden.

The aim of the game is to cut a lawn. It sounds simple. Yet the whole deal is complicated by the



neighbours, whose mower you "borrowed" to mow the lawn. You avoid them, or better still, get your dog on them. Shouting "Down Shep" doesn't work. This is more a cutesey game than a blaster.

Hover Bovver is available on both the 64 and the Atari micros. There is little difference between the versions, yet the game feels slightly better on the Atari. In the Llamasoft newsletter, *The Nature of the Beast*, Jeff writes that "the more I see of the Atari, the more I like it. The potential of the machine is enormous, and the colour effects knock out your eyeballs."

SHEEP IN SPACE

Slighty reminiscent of **Defender, Sheep in Space** is set in surreal surroundings with a planet surface at the bottom and top of the screen, the inside of a huge torus of "doughnut" which is eight miles round. A number of these ecosystems were built to supply a human colony precariously located on the fringe of the Zzyaxian Empire.

Needless to say the fiends attacked. In response the humans refitted a number of sheep which hadn't yet been converted into casserole of lamb chops into "multi-shielded combat sheepoids". Each crazy mixed-up mutton is capable of firing "Bonios of Doom", ie.



bullets and utilising "Dimension Jump Translalation Modes", the woollen equivalent of hyperspacing.

As with other recent Llamasoft games, there is a wide variety of aliens for you to splatter, and a total of 48 different levels. The interesting feature of *Sheep in Space* is the way that gravity acts on the game. Both the upper and lower surfaces possess gravity. The nearer a sheep gets to either surface the slower it travels. So for maximum speed, life in the fast lane begins equidistant between the two surfaces. Bonios of Doom drop to the nearest surface when fired. It is important to keep your sheep fed. To do this he has to periodically land on a pasture and scoff. Overeating results in an exploding stomach, and can be very nasty. Eating also replenishes the sheep's shields so you need to strike a balance between muttony gluttony and shield status.

ATTACK OF THE MUTANT CAMELS

Basically the aim of this game is to butcher camels and get the hell out of it (before the RSPCA catch you?). The Atari version of *Attack* has some of the most amazing graphics known to mankind. I've seen some sunsets in my time, but those shown as part of this game are breathtaking.

REVENGE OF THE MUTANT CAMELS



At this stage in the proceedings, the Earth v Zzyaxian match has gone into extra time. Everything is even, and if one side doesn't make a breakthrough soon, the whole war will have to be decided on penalties. Llama-lloving Jeff Minter must have fallen for those camels while developing *Attack*, because this time they are back, not as enemies, but as Earth's main defence against the heinous aliens.

Contacted by telepathic metagoats, the 90 foot high camels were convinced of their true loyalty to Earth. Pyramids with eyes wink in the background, another Minter motif, as dromedaries drift across the land spitting at all-comers.

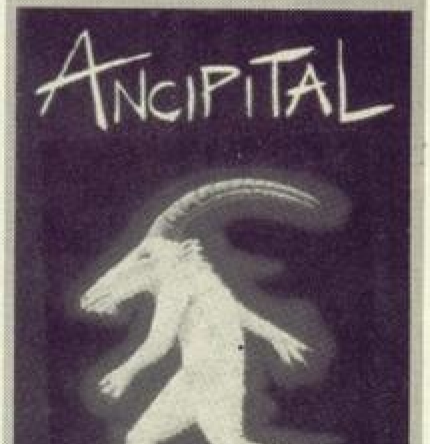
Like metagalactic llamas, mutant camels' spit is deadly Targets include telephone kiosks and skiing kangeroos, all pretty normal zap fare in a Llamasoft game. The skies rain with canes, CND symbols and a Eugene carrying axes. A sideswipe at Eugene Evans, late of Imagine, or a reference to an obscure piece of music by some dead rock stars?

ANCIPITAL

One way of looking at the latest Llamasoft computer confection, *Ancipital*, is to call it an adventure. At least there are certain elements of adventure to the game, but there is little resemblance to the GO NORTH, TAKE TREASURE nonsense that make text adventures such a bore. In fact there is hardly any text at all.

Ancipital's action takes place in the "Zzyaxian weapons-research outpost", the meanest place this side of a Tube station at midnight. The air is filled with a powerful hallucinogenic designed to burn out the brains of any humans who might happen to stray into the area. So they sent the Ancipitals, half-man, half-goat and half-wits. There are 100 different rooms or "chambers of defence" to contend with. Each has a different type of nasty to attack you and requires a different strategy from the player.

In the same way that *Atic Atac* scores are measured both by the number of points amassed and the percentage of rooms visited, *Ancipital* has a dual-mode scoring system. One of the rules which helps reviewers tell a good game from a bad one is do you get better the more often you play the game? The answer with *Ancipital* is Yes. *Ancipital* is just enough to keep Lliamasoft lovers going until the next piece of psychedelic Minter madness. Jeff calls it a "progressive" arcade game. I call it a damn fine zap.





```
1 REM      OCTONIUM MOON
2   REM <1984> AUTHOR:SCHWANENFLUGEL

3  REM COPYRIGHT >OCTOSOFT<
       SCHWANENFLUGEL/TRENKER

 4:
 5   POINTS%=0:PROCINIT
 6 MODE5:VDU5
 7PROCSETUP
7997:
7998:
7999:
8000 PROCYOU
8001 I=FNINERTIA
8003 IFFNL ANDP%=1 AND ABS(Y)<2 PROCLAN
DED ELSE IFFNL AND Y 2M$="LANDING SPEED
 TOO HIGH":GOTO 12000
8004  IFFNC OR FND GOTO 12000
8005 PROCIN
8006 IF C=65 AND FUEL%>0 GOTO 13000
8009 Y=Y GRAVITY
8010 A=A+X:B=B+Y:IF B<80 THEN 12000
8011 IF B>1200 THEN 13006
8017 PROCINSTRUM
8020 GOTO 8000
8030:
8999:
9000 DEF PROCSETUP
9002 Y%=RND(200)+100
9005 VDU19,2,2,0,0,0
9006 F=0
```

OCTONIUM MOON

Your mission—land on the famous and deadly moon, mine the priceless ore —and get away alive!
Controls:
Z,X: Rotate left/right
A: Abort
,: Light Thrust
Return: heavy Thrust
K: Jettison fuel
J: Jettison Octonium

```
9007 GAIN%=0
9010 GCOL1,2
9012 P=RND(200)+100
9013 Q=10:PERIOD=RND(75)+125:PHASE=RND(
)*2
9014 W=RND(300)+100
9020 FORX%=0TO1280 STEP8 :IF X%MOD63=1
Q=RND(14)-8
 9025 IF FNFLAT PROCFLAT
 9030 MOVEX%,80:DRAWX%,Y%+80
 9040 Y%=Y%+10*SIN(X%/PERIOD+PHASE):Y%=Y
%+(RND(4)-2)*4+Q:IFY%<0Y%=-Y%
 9050 NEXT
 9060 GCOL0,7:FORT=1 TO50
 9061 S%=RND(1280):T%=RND(944)+80:IF POI
NT(S%,T%) NEXT:GOTO9063
 9062 PLOT69,S%,T%:NEXT
 9063IF Y%>900 GOTO9070
 9070 MOVE 0,80:GCOL0,3:DRAW1280,80
 9075 MOVE 22,10:DRAW 160,10:DRAW160,44:
DRAW 22,44:DRAW 22,10:MOVE92,10:DRAW92,4
4
 9080 IF FUEL%>500 GCOL0,2 ELSE GCOL0,1
 9082MOVE200,40:DRAWFUEL%/2+200,40
 9085 GCOL0,3:FORQ=0TO9:PLOT69,200+Q*125
,36:NEXT
 9087 PR=1:GAIN%=0
 9088 A=40:B=1010:X=RND(3)+2:Y=RND(2)-6

 9090 ENDPROC
 9098:
 9099:
 9100 DEFPROCLANDED
 9105FOR T=0 TO 200 STEP 20
 9110SOUND1,-15,T,1:NEXT
 9115GAIN%=GAIN%+1000*RND(1)*PR::FUEL%=F
UEL%+300*RND(1)+80
 9120 LX=X:LY=Y:X=0:Y=.5:PR=PR+1:PROCERA
SE
```

```
9125 IF FUEL%<500 GCOL0,1 ELSE GCOL0,2
9127MOVE 200,40:DRAW FUEL%/2+200,40
9130 IF FUEL%>500 FF=0
9150 ENDPROC
9170:
9175:
9200 DEFPROCINSTRUM
9210 MOVE 30,40:IFABS(X)<.1GCOL0,2 ELSE
GCOL0,1:SOUND2,-3,99,1
9212 VDU 240
9214  MOVE 96,40:IF Y>-2GCOL0,2 ELSE GC
OL0,1:SOUND1,-8,140,1
9216 VDU240
9221:
9225GCOL0,0:MOVEFUEL%/2+200,40:DRAWFUEL
%/2+225,40
9230 IF FNCHCOL FF=1:GCOL0,1:MOVE200,40
:DRAW200+FUEL%/2,40:ENDPROC
9235 IF FUEL%<500 SOUND2,-9,200,1:ENDPR
OC
9245:
9250 ENDPROC
9255:
9256:
9475:
9496:
9500 DEFPROCINIT
9503VDU23,240,255,255,255,255,255,255,2
55,255
9505VDU23,230,24,36,90,90,36,60,90,195
9506VDU23,231,4,10,10,17,21,14,10,27
9507VDU23,232,16,22,26,5,5,26,22,16
9508VDU23,234,1,13,19,20,20,19,13,1
9509VDU23,233,27,10,21,17,17,10,10,4
9510VDU23,241,129,129,195,195,195,231,2
55,255
9511:
9512 VDU5
9520 DIMA$(4):FORT=1TO4:A$(T)=CHR$(T+23
0):NEXT
9523 SFUEL%=1000:FUEL%=SFUEL%:LFUEL%=SF
UEL%
9524:
9525 DEFFNC=POINT(A+58+2*X,B-30+Y)=2
9526 DEFFND=POINT(A+8+2*X,B-30+Y)=2
9527 DEFFNS=(RND(1)<.9)
9528 DEFFNFLAT=(RND(1)<.02)
9529 DEFFNL=(POINT(A+2*X+32,B+Y-32)=1)
9530 DEFFNINERTIA=(FUEL%+WEIGHT%+GAIN%)
/3500
9531 DEFFNCHCOL=(FUEL%<500 AND FF=0)
9534:
9535 WEIGHT%=1000
9536GRAVITY=.05
9537 P%=2
9538 FF=0
9539 M$=""
9545 POINTS%=0
9590 ENDPROC
9595:
9596:
9600 DEFPROCYOU
9605 MOVE A-X,B-Y-4:GCOL0,0:VDU240:MOVE
A,B:GCOL0,7:PRINTA$(P%)
9610MOVE A-X+4,B-Y+28:GCOL0,0:VDU240
9611 GCOL0,1
9645 ENDPROC
9648:
9649:
9650 DEFPROCFLAT
9655 G%=X%:FORX%=X%TOX%+64STEP8:MOVEX%,
80:DRAWX%,Y%+80:NEXT:GCOL0,1:MOVEG%,Y%+8
0:DRAWX%,Y%+80
9660 GCOL 0,2
9680 ENDPROC
9685:
```



OCTONIUM MOON

```
9686:
9700 DEFPROCIN
9705 C=INKEY(1)
9708 *FX21,0
9710 IF C=90 P%=P%-1:IF P%=0 P%=4
9711 IF C=88 P%=P%+1:IF P%=5 P%=1
9712 IF C=93 THRUST=.2:FLOSS=2:N=5:LEVE
L=-13:PROCTHRUST
9713 IF C=13 THRUST=.35:FLOSS=4:N=5:LEV
EL=-15:PROCTHRUST
9714 IF C=95 THRUST=.5:FLOSS=12:N=6:LEV
EL=-15:PROCTHRUST
9715 IF C=74 AND POINTS%>49 POINTS%=POI
NTS%-50:SOUND0,-15,2,1
9716 IF C=75 AND FUEL%>0 FUEL%=FUEL%-20
:SOUND0,-15,1,1
9740 ENDPROC
9741:
9742:
9745 DEFPROCNOABORT
9747 GCOL0,0:MOVE 200,40:DRAW 1280,40
9749 Y=B/300:X=0:P%=1
9750 FUEL%=0
9751 ENDPROC
9753:
9755:
9765:
9766:
9800 DEFPROCTHRUST
9801 IF FUEL%<0 ENDPROC
9802 SOUND 0,LEVEL,N,5
9804 I=FNINERTIA
9806 X=X-THRUST*(P%=2)/I+THRUST*(P%=4)/
I:Y=Y-THRUST*(P%=1)/I+THRUST*(P%=3)/I:FU
EL%=FUEL%-FLOSS:Y=Y-GRAVITY
9820 IF FUEL%<LFUEL% LFUEL%=FUEL%
9850 ENDPROC
9855:
9856:
9900 DEFPROCERASE
9901 YSEARCH=B+4:ALIMIT=A+26
9903 REPEAT
9904 YSEARCH=YSEARCH-1:IFYSEARCH<0 ALIM
IT=ALIMIT+10:YSEARCH=B+4
9905 UNTIL POINT(ALIMIT,YSEARCH)=1
9906 XSEARCH=ALIMIT
9907 REPEAT
9908 XSEARCH=XSEARCH-1:UNTIL POINT(XSEA
RCH,YSEARCH)<>1
9909 GCOL0,0:MOVE XSEARCH+4,YSEARCH:DRA
W XSEARCH+68,YSEARCH
9915 ENDPROC
9920:
9921:
9922:
12000FORT=1TO150:VDU19,0,RND(4),0,0,0:NE
XT:VDU19,0,0,0,0,0:*FX21,0
12005 D%=A+36:E%=B 32
12015 IF M$<>""THEN12050
12017 POINTS%=POINTS%+GAIN%
12020 IF FUEL%<0 M$="LACK OF FUEL":GOTO1
2050
12030 M$="TOUCHDOWN OUTSIDE PLAIN"
12040:
12041:
12050 SOUND0,-15,4,10:SOUND0,-13,5,25:SO
UND0,-12,6,100:SOUND0,-10,6,400:MOVEA,B-
24:GCOL0,0:VDU240:MOVEA,B-44:GCOL0,2:VDU
241
12051 MOVE A,B-63:GCOL0,2:VDU240
12053MOVEA,B:GCOL0,0:VDU240:B=B-50:A=A+2
6:FORT=1 TO400:GCOL0,0-(RND(1)<.5):PLOT6
9,A+6+(RND(100)-50)*T/500,B+70*(T/500)-R
ND(10):NEXT
```

```
12054 MODE7:VDU10,10,129,141:PRINT"MISSI
ON FAILED":VDU129,141:PRINT"MISSION FAIL
ED":*FX21,0
12055 VDU10,10
12060 VDU130:PRINT"DUE TO:";M$
12061VDU10:PRINT" VERTICAL SPEED:"INT(Y*
100)/100" M/S":VDU10
12063 VDU134:PRINT"MISSION DATA":IF FUEL
%<0 FUEL%=0
12064 PRINT" FUEL:"FUEL%,"OCTONIUM:"POIN
TS%
12065 VDU132:PRINT"PRESS RETURN FOR ANOT
HER MISSION"
12068 VDU23,1,0;0;0;0
12070A=INKEY(1):VDU23,1,0;0;0;0:IFA=-1 G
OTO12070
12075 IF A=13 RUN ELSECLS:STOP
12500 STOP
12505:
12506:
12507:
13000 FUEL%=FUEL%-100:FORB=B TO1100STEP8
:I=FNINERTIA:FUEL%=FUEL%-4*I:IF FUEL%<0
PROCNOABORT:GOTO 8000
13001GCOL0,0:MOVE A,B-8:VDU240:GCOL0,3:M
OVEA,B:VDU231:SOUND0,-15,4,1:NEXT:GOTO13
006
13003 GOTO13006
13005 FORB=B TO0STEP-4:MOVEA,B+16:GCOL0
,0:VDU240:GCOL0,3:MOVEA,B:VDU233:IF POIN
T(A,B-24)=2 GOTO12000 ELSE NEXT:GOTO1200
0
13006 MODE7:VDU10,10,129,141:PRINT"MISSI
ON ABORTED":VDU129,141:PRINT"MISSION ABO
RTED":IF FUEL%<LFUEL% LFUEL%=FUEL%
13007 VDU10,10:FORT=0TO39:PRINTTAB(T,5)"
-":NEXT:VDU11,134:PRINT" >SPACESHIP DATA
:":VDU10
13008 G%=SFUEL%-FUEL%:LX=INT(LX*100):LX=
LX/100:LY=INT(LY*100):LY=LY/100:I=FNINER
TIA*3500:POINTS%=POINTS%+GAIN%
13010 PRINT"> WEIGHT OF SPACESHIP:";INT(
I)
13011     PRINT"> FUEL IN MAIN TANK  :";F
UEL%:PRINT"> LOWEST FUEL LEVEL  :";LFUEL
%
13012 IF G%>0 PRINT">FUEL LOSS" ELSE IF
G%<=0PRINT">FUEL GAIN"
13013 VDU134:PRINT"> LAST LANDING VELOCI
TIES:":VDU13:PRINT"> HORIZONTALLY:";LX
13014 PRINT"> VERTICALLY  :";LY
13015 PRINT"> OCTONIUM IN CARGO BAY
   :";GAIN%
13016 PRINT"> OCTONIUM IN MOTHERSHIP MAI
N BAY:";POINTS%
13017 SFUEL%=FUEL%:CO=0:FORT=0TO39:PRINT
TAB(T,17)"_":NEXT
13018  VDU23,1,0;0;0;0;
13019  VDU10,10,132:PRINT"PRESS 'RETURN'
 TO CONTINUE MISSION."
13020 *FX21,0
13021 C=INKEY(1):IF C=-1 GOTO13021
13033 FUEL%=FUEL%+GAIN%/10
13035  GOTO 6
```



ADVERTISEMENT INDEX



For almost a year now you've been reading reviews with nothing more to go on than a set of enigmatic initials. But our reviewers have names. They have faces. If you prick them, they bleed. And they like playing games. We present, therefore . . . .

GAMES REVIEWERS

JOHN CONQUEST



After — and, to be honest, during — a long day's slog at those no-Ks and one-Ks, not to mention the no-loads, the time comes when even the great JC can take no more. Sweeping aside the pile of boxes waiting to be evaluated he reaches for his trusty . . .

River Raid (Activision) is still my favourite relaxant. I'm up round the 200,000 (OK, 150,000 on a bad day) mark, which may be small potatoes compared to the millionaires I hear about, but pleases me no end. This game has so much style and content that even after six months I haven't got tired of it. The initial stages are well-worn grooves now, though I still find the occasional new and more elegant solution, not to mention the odd extra points, while up round bridge 80 it's still relatively unexplored territory. A real classic, on the Atari anyway, which (having seen the MSX version recently) I shan't be parting with.

Bruce Lee (US Gold) is a visually stunning and mechanically superb action game that I can play over and over. Kicking and punching, leaping and ducking, it pushes my tired old reflexes to the limit.

Hampstead (Melbourne House) is the current numero uno adventure game, though I suppose I'll crack that last 5% sometime and give it up. Still, at the rate I'm going, that should be just in time to start in on Lever and Jones' rumoured Costa Brava holiday adventure. I

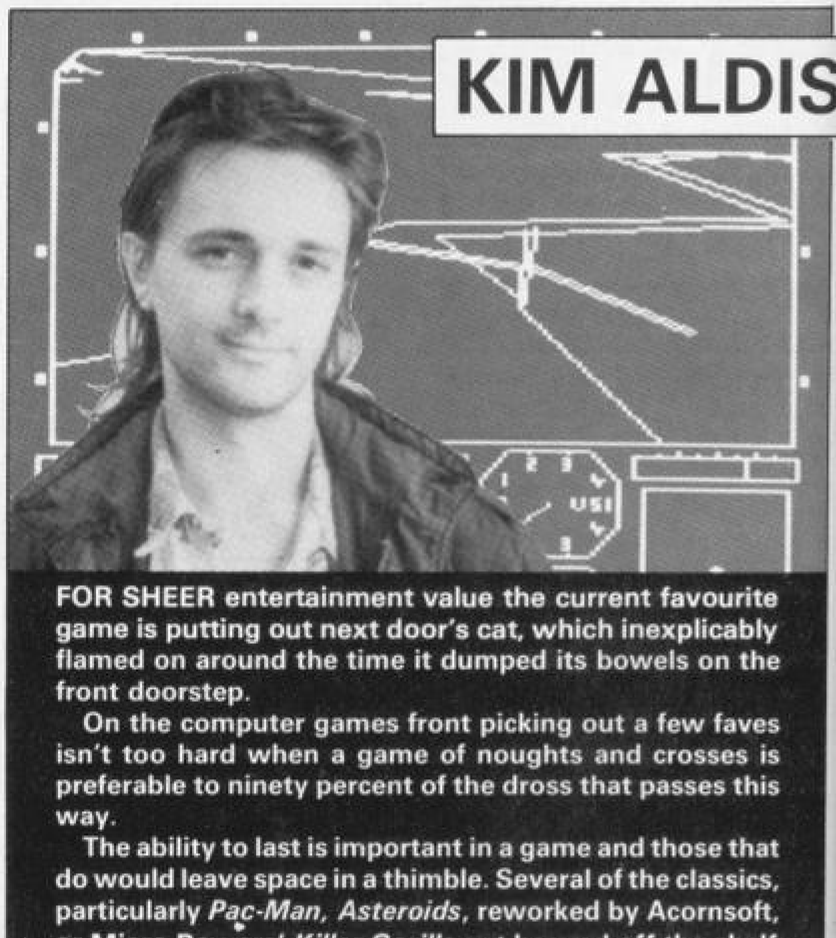


love *Hampstead*'s sense of humour and, however much I enjoy playing computer games, it is refreshing once in a while to have one that's aimed in the general direction of my age bracket.

Listen, don't ask.

Dungeons & Dragons (Intellivision) is the only video game, apart from Colecovision's *Ladybug*, that isn't gathering dust at the back of the cupboard. Quite why I still play *D&D* I don't know, as it's been quite a while since I lost even at the hardest level, but it has that compulsive quality that makes it ever playable.

KIM ALDIS



FOR SHEER entertainment value the current favourite game is putting out next door's cat, which inexplicably flamed on around the time it dumped its bowels on the front doorstep.

On the computer games front picking out a few faves isn't too hard when a game of noughts and crosses is preferable to ninety percent of the dross that passes this way.

The ability to last is important in a game and those that do would leave space in a thimble. Several of the classics, particularly *Pac-Man, Asteroids*, reworked by Acornsoft, or Micro Powers' *Killer Gorilla* get heaved off the shelf for an airing every now and then, but maybe it's in the very nature of comp ter games that they only last a few days before being replaced by some new Hypergalactic-Mega-Monster-Muncher. Which is probably why some jerk from Croydon who has problems with two plus two can impress a hick software house from Little Snodbury with his version of noughts and crosses for retarded rats. Hundreds of the things pass through these doors and of the many reviewed only a handful stand out.

Current top of the stack is Acornsofts' *Elite* which, whether the authors like it or not, is always going to be dumped in the same category as *Aviator*. A masterful piece of programming, mainly because of the superb graphics but also, I suspect, because there is always further to go, more weaponry to win and more variety around the corner.

Other favourites culled from the crop include *Frak*, because the graphics are unbelievable and the humour indicates a perverse mind; Micro Powers' *Ghouls*, again because of the graphics; and *Mr. Ee*, a recent release from Micro Power which I can't put down.

TONY TAKOUSHI





THE GAMES I play cover the Commodore 64, Atari 800, BBC, Vic 20 and Spectrum micros.

On the 64 front I enjoy a good session of *Super Pipeline* and *Jammin'* (Taskset), *Son of Blagger/Guardian* (Allgata) and *Revenge of the Mutant Camels* (Llamasoft). The Atari has always been one of my favourite micros because of its superlative colours and sound abilities. The games I really enjoy playing are *Star Raiders/Escape From Fractalus (this game is mega for 3D effects in the raster format — it even makes Encounter look slow) Necromancer/Bandits* and *Pole Position*.

The BBC — well, it has to include *Elite* and *Frak*.

The Vic 20 has a few classics on it. *Lazerzone* from Llamasoft is still one of THE classic blasts for me. It has some of the finest sound effects and action I have ever seen for any micro. There is also the now-banned version of *Pac-Man* called *Jelly Monsters*. This version has yet to be beaten by ANY other micro.

Finally, *Omega Race* is one of the toughest and most skilful games on the Vic.

The Spectrum has few games I come back to. The latest one I really enjoy is *Robotron* from Atarisoft. Also *Atic Atac/Deathchase* and *Missile Defense* (Anirog).

At the end of the day I really do spend most of my time on the full size arcade machines I have in my flat. They are *Tempest* (Atari) and *Radarscope* (Nintendo). There ain't nothing like the real thing!.

ERS PLAY

BILL BENNETT



MY FAVOURITE game is *Football Manager* from Addictive Games — it comes in versions for the Spectrum and the Commodore 64. I already have the Spectrum version, and would like the Commodore 64 version for Christmas.

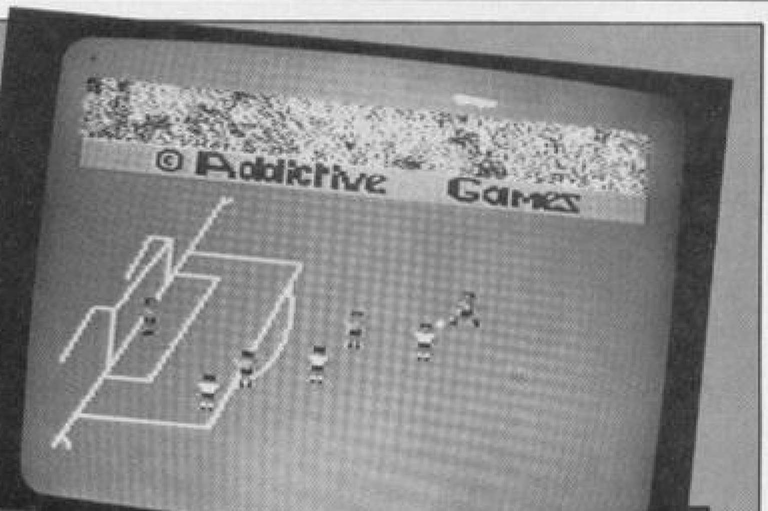
Football Manager appeals to me for two reasons. Firstly, like a lot of people, I've always suspected that I could do a better job than Bobby Robson or Brian Clough. But the best thing about the game is that it is sociable. I like to invite a pile of friends round, fill the fridge with beer, and spend hour after hour managing Leatherhead from the bottom of the Fourth Division to the top of the First. Recently, I discovered *United* from CCC, which is a similar game, requiring different tactics. Believe me, buying Mark Hately for your local club gives you a great feeling of power.

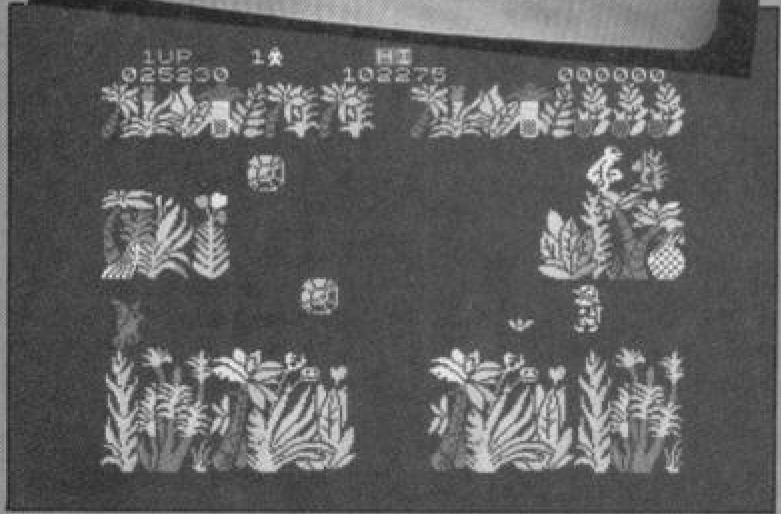
Fantasies on the whole don't interest me. I don't really like adventure games — I find them boring. Adventure fans argue that they stretch your brain. I prefer other forms of cerebral entertainment, in particular Psion's *Scrabble* for the Spectrum. I can usually beat it on the top level, and I don't like the way it cheats — certain words it uses aren't in any dictionary; but when a humanoid opponent isn't around, this game is great.

For the same reason I really like the *Backgammon* game from Sinclair Research. Though again, it isn't really a tough enough opponent, but then I like winning. However Intelligent Software's *Cyrus Chess* is another favourite, and it can beat the pants off me.

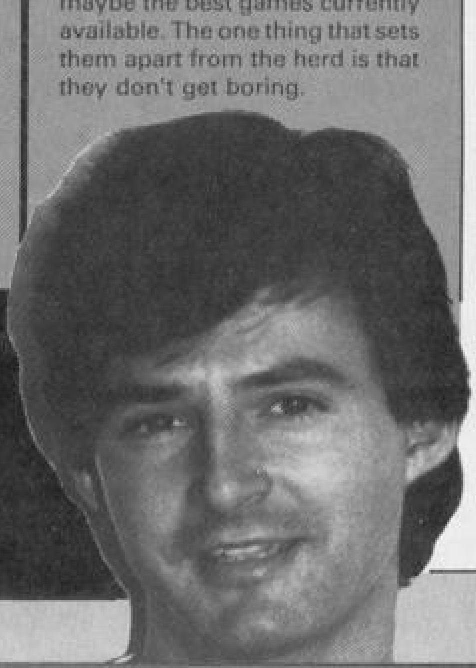
There is something about Atari's *Eastern Front* that fascinates me. Once you master the technique, it is easy to win the game. But what a game! I like all the Atari games, and when I should be working, I find a quick game of *Pac-Man*, or any of the arcade cartridges, will recharge my batteries. I don't always have access to an Atari computer, though, so to satisfy my arcade game bloodlust on the Commodore 64, I turn to Jeff Minter's games. I'm a real fan of "Animal" Minter's crazed zoological blasters. My favourite was *Sheep in Space*, but is now the amazing *Ancipital*. Since the cassette clattered through my letter-box I have devoted 50% of my waking hours to mastering the game. It is the greatest thing in home entertainment since John "Yogi" Baird invented the television. When it comes to arcade games, hairy Jeff is king.

Brilliant though Llamasoft games are, they are not at their best on the Sinclair Spectrum. When the Spectrum is set-up, I reach for *Atic Atac* or *Sabre Wulf* from Ultimate Play The Game. Both these games make the most of the somewhat limited hardware of my battered old Spectrum. All the games mentioned above are classics, maybe the best games currently available. The one thing that sets them apart from the herd is that they don't get boring.





STEVE KEATON



Being something of a fanatical gamester I'll play pretty much anything that'll come to hand. Obviously if I've got more than an hour to kill I'll dig out an adventure and try my luck, but more often than not I'll just dip into a simple shoot 'em up like *Zalaga* or play *Mine Storm* on the Vectrex. Nothing too complex. I like my fun fast and cute. Alternatively I'll watch some gore (usually Italian) on the Betamax or dive headlong into a pile of comix. I'm just an everyday sorta guy really . . .

GAMES REVIEWERS PLAY

FIN FAHEY

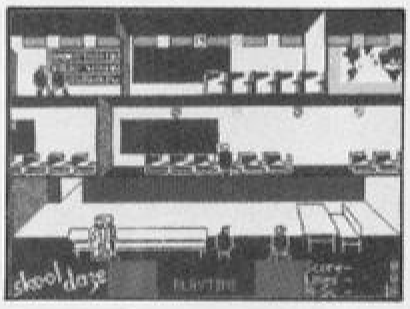


I HAVE an unabashed admiration for arcade adventures such as Mikro-gen's *Pyjamarama*, *School-Daze* from Microsphere, and the recent Ultimate successor to *Sabre Wulf*, *Knight Lore*. Having said that, I have to also admit that I don't spend a huge amount of time playing them. This is because I'm a poor loser, and since I'll never be a teenager again, and my reflexes are shot to bits by too many late nights and lunch-time boozing, I spend more time playing games that require a more thoughtful approach. Of course I always claim this is due to my refined sense of literary aesthetics.

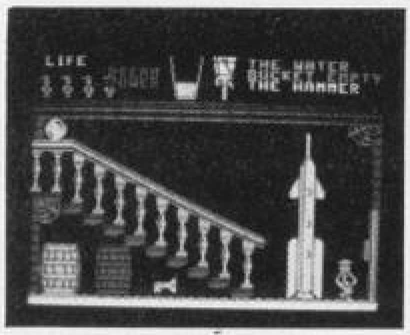
Adventures and strategy games are my real meat, the only problem being that there are very few good ones. So far the adventure game scene has been market by a profound laziness on the part of software houses, although I don't feel that will last. Exceptions are the solid meat-and-potatoes approach of Level 9, who at least go for sheer scale, and Melbourne House, who show signs of (gaspo!) originality.

My nomination for top adventure this year would certainly go to *Hampstead*. Strategy games are stuck in an even deeper slough of naffness, and to my mind, *Eastern Front* from Atari is so far unsurpassed.

In spite of being a life-long pacifist, I've also enjoyed playing U.S. Gold's *NATO Commander* (I claim it offers valuable insights into the military mentality). Pet hates? *Kong* clones, *Sword and Sorcery*, and tacky little graphics added to grotty adventures in the forlorn hope of making them more saleable.









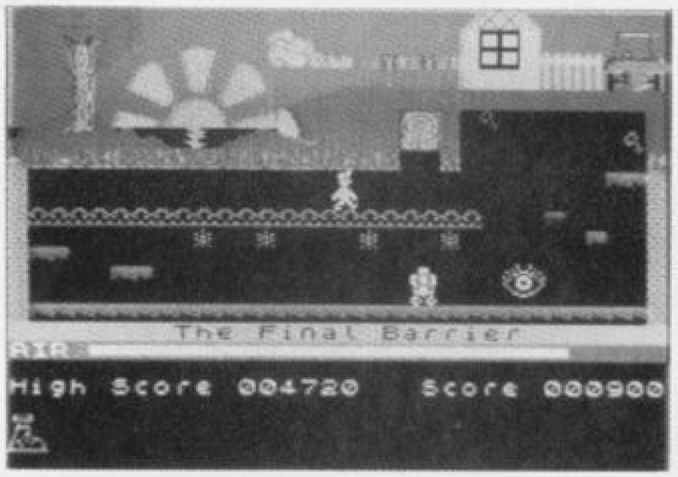
NICKY XIKLUNA



Actually, at the moment I'm still stunned, nay, obsessed with *Ghostbusters*. I think it's great. Not only are design and playability first rate, but the galvanisation of the SID chip into action, has resulted in the most true and pleasing musical arrangement I've ever heard. The speech simulation is unbelievable. More to the point, I never could resist a game that made me laugh.

But that's this week. Last week Ultimate's *Underwurlde* and *Knight Lore* were earthly sentients to Heavenware. I'm a sucker for games of character. *Frak!* is another favourite on that score. Then there's *Ghouls*. And Matthew Smith's *Wet Set Jilly* and *Manic Miner*. Add Mani Minter's crazed fantasies to the ranks of perennials. I also solemnly confess to having been a teenage *Valhalla* groupie. (But now I've grown up. Its drab. I'll put Melbourne Houses' Adventure, *Hampstead* in its place in my Hall of Fame.)

My games allegiances are pretty fickle. Software-we-love is so quickly superceded. If you want an all-time favourite — I'll give you Carol Shaw's *River Raid*. Now please may I go to the ball?



RICHARD BURTON

STOP ANY software reviewer on the street (resist the temptation to press money on him) and ask him to tell you, truthfully, what games he likes to play in his 'off-duty' moments. Chances are he'll say — if he's in one of his rare coherent moods — that there are several games he'd like to play more often . . . if only he had the time. In reality there's pile of cassettes and ROM's sitting gathering dust on a corner of his desk waiting for the moment when the flow of new releases eases and they can be taken out and used again. That moment hasn't arrived yet.

Just such a dusty pile is staring at me as I write. Do I really hear tiny voices pleading "Play me, play me"? If I do they aren't asking for more than they deserve.

When it's been a long night loading up tape after tape the immediacy of a video game system's ROM start-up is very welcome. I still consider the Colecovision to be the finest example of the video game genre and some classic game ROMs are contained in its repertoire. *Mouse Trap* and *Lady Bug* still have me yelling for more after hours of play. Both are excellent examples of addictive, challenging gameplay. *River Raid*, of course, is good on any system but Activision's Colevision edition ranks among my particular favourites. Even the venerable Atari VCS maintains a soft spot in this old gamer's heart by still surprising me with gems like *Space Shuttle*, again from Activision. Established favourites like *Ms. Pac-Man* and *Yar's Revenge* are not forgotten when the VCS is trundled out.

Back in the slo-load world tape-based offerings it's still the arcaders that I go for but not necessarily the flashy zap-em-ups. Games like Quicksilva's *Ant Attack* and Vortex's *Android 2* I rate for their innovation as much as their gameplay. Well, there's always the exception that proves the rule and Micro Power's *Ghouls* is great action whichever way you look at it.

Current faves? Well, jockeying for a place in the dust at the moment are *Ghostbusters* and Ultimate's newy, *Knight Lore* — both classics in the making.

Which is, of course, to leave a lot of great games out in the cold, undeservedly. And I plan to rectify that right now because I've got them all here . . . well around here somewhere.



ARCADE ALLEY





GO ON, give me something easy to do. I'll do anything you want. I'll fight Frank Bruno. I'll swim the Channel. I'll run the Marathon. Just please, *please*, don't make me play *Hyper Sports* again.

At first I thought I was ready; I have the audacity to believe that I was prepared. I'd spent months in training on *Track and Field*. I'd run for the bus at least twice, I'd plunged my fingers into hot bags of french fries until they were as rock. I'd taken gold medals, scored world record points. I seriously felt that I was in the top flight. But I hadn't reckoned with the cunning or ingenuity of the programmers at Konami. 'Cos *Hyper Sports* is a truly Olympian hurdle. *Hyper Sports* makes *Track and Field* look like ludo.

Now some of you may think I'm exaggerating — well, more's the pity for you. I can assure you that if you are caught unawares by this machine you will need the proverbial oxygen mask before you can say Steve Ovett. It may well *look* innocent nestling as it does quite innocuously between *Dragon's Lair* and *Driller Killer vs. Pac-Man*, but feed the beast 30p and you are in danger of a total physical and emotional breakdown.

The game itself resembles its predecessor in line and form; the usual excellent graphics are complemented perfectly by great sound effects and hilarious visual gags; judges smile synpathetically, contestants weep unashamedly, and nosey arcade attendants laugh hysterically over your shoulder as you fail to lift 150kg for the third time.

As with *Track and Field* the game is divided into 'events' (though there are seven now as opposed to six) and your progression through these is dependent solely on your own ability to satisfy the given criterion of qualification. (If you don't qualify you're back to the money slot and the nosey attendants laugh even louder.)

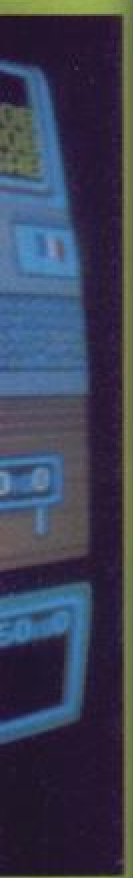
The first of these devilish disciplines is swimming. The starter gun fires, your man dives into the Olympic length pool (along with five others) and the race on. This all seems quite straightforwa really — your fingers pound away at th buttons, the little man ploughs throu the water, the audience cheer — it's easy as falling off a spring-board. The your man drowns. Did the nose attendant tell you that you had to pre the middle button when the 'breath sign appears? No he did not. Did laugh? Yes he did. You start again. Yo pound away, your man ploughs throug

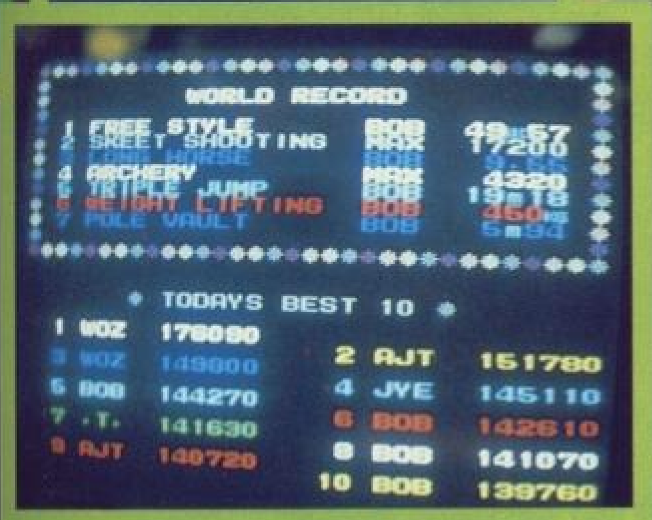
DAVID DORRELL takes himself to the outer limits (of financial disaster) sweating it out on Konami's Hyper Sports.

GOING



Is it true? Can it be true? Will tracksuits, marathons, sweat and cardiac arrest all go out of fashion just as arcade makers perfect THE ideal Sports Game? Will anyone care?









the race is
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he nosey
d to press
e 'breathe'
ot. Did he
again. You
ns through

the water, you press the middle button at the wrong time . . . your swimmer glugs on two litres of chlorinated graphics. Eventually you learn to swim. Eventually the attendant learns how to walk again . . .

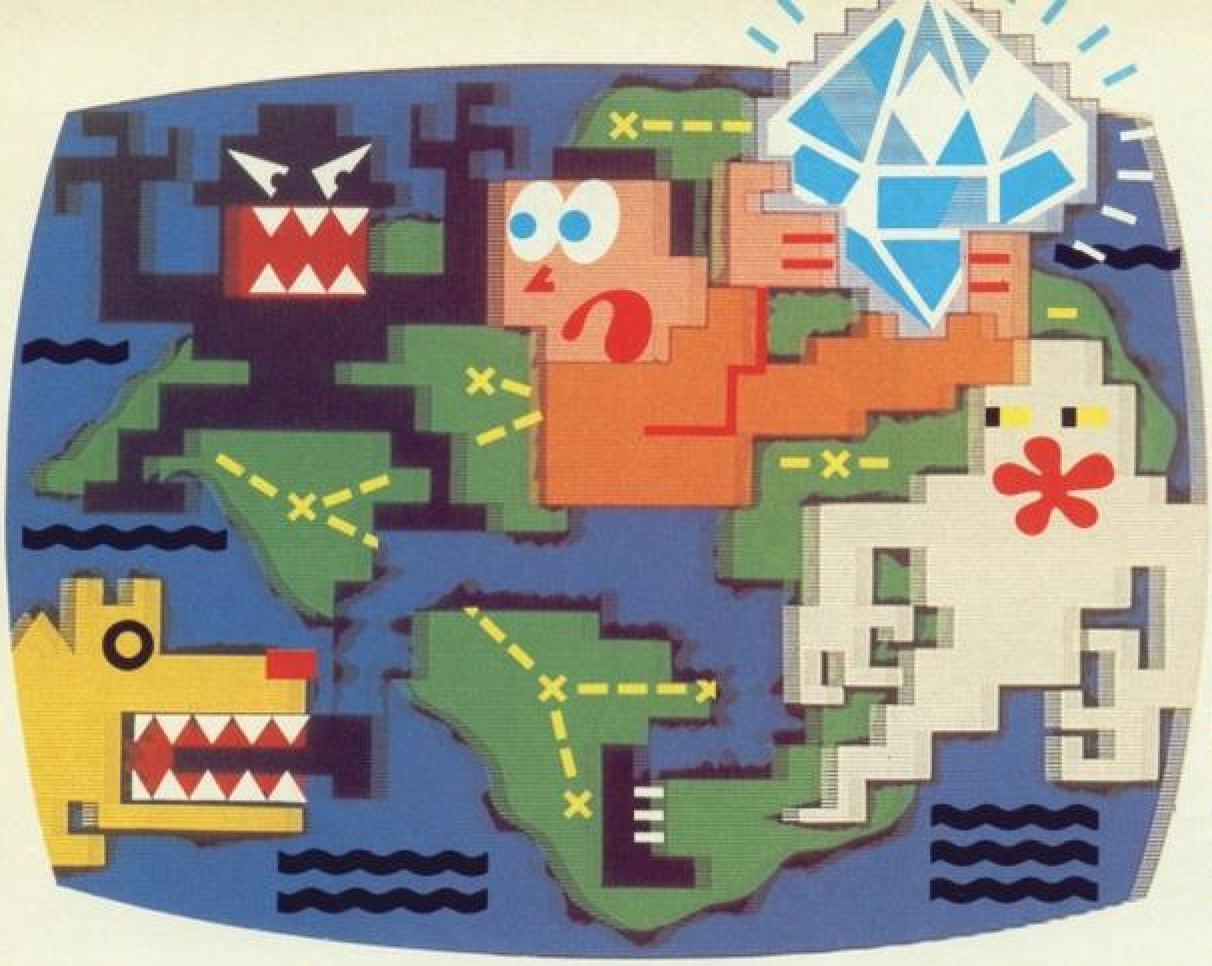
Congratulations! After qualifying within the two minute time limit you're on to the second round, 'skeet shooting' (or clay pigeon shooting as we call it). This is of course totally impossible. You get three attempts to qualify for this round. £5.10 and 51 rounds later I go through . . . just. All you have to do is hit the skeets as they fly through your sights. You have to hit twenty to gain the necessary 200 points. I've had easier times juggling chain-saws . . . But by the end of the day I could have parted the attendant's quiff at fifty paces. Then it started to get hard.

You're through to the third round, your man runs along the gym floor, he hits the spring board, flips off the long-horse and manages all of one somersault before landing quite unceremoniously on his head in front of the judges. Someone in the corner laughs. If you're really lucky, and you manage to press the buttons fast enough, you can make the necessary four somersaults and land upright. And of course one day you'll find a goose that lays golden eggs.

So now you've sailed through three events and — if you're the average player — you've notched up an overdraft that looks like a New York phone number. What better then than a quiver or two on the archery field? A birds-eye view allows you to shoot straight at the

CONTINUED ON P. 51

G FOR THE BURN



a diamond can also claim his o
her share of the Royalty Fun
This grows with ever
copy sold up to a maximum o
£1 million.
The Spirit of the Stone
book is a great read.
The Spirit of th
Stones software is grea
entertainment.
But they're much mor
than that.
They're an adventure.
A fascinating tale o
mystery and imagination.
A voyage of discovery o
the Isle of Wight.
A voyage of discover

STONES HIDDEN ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

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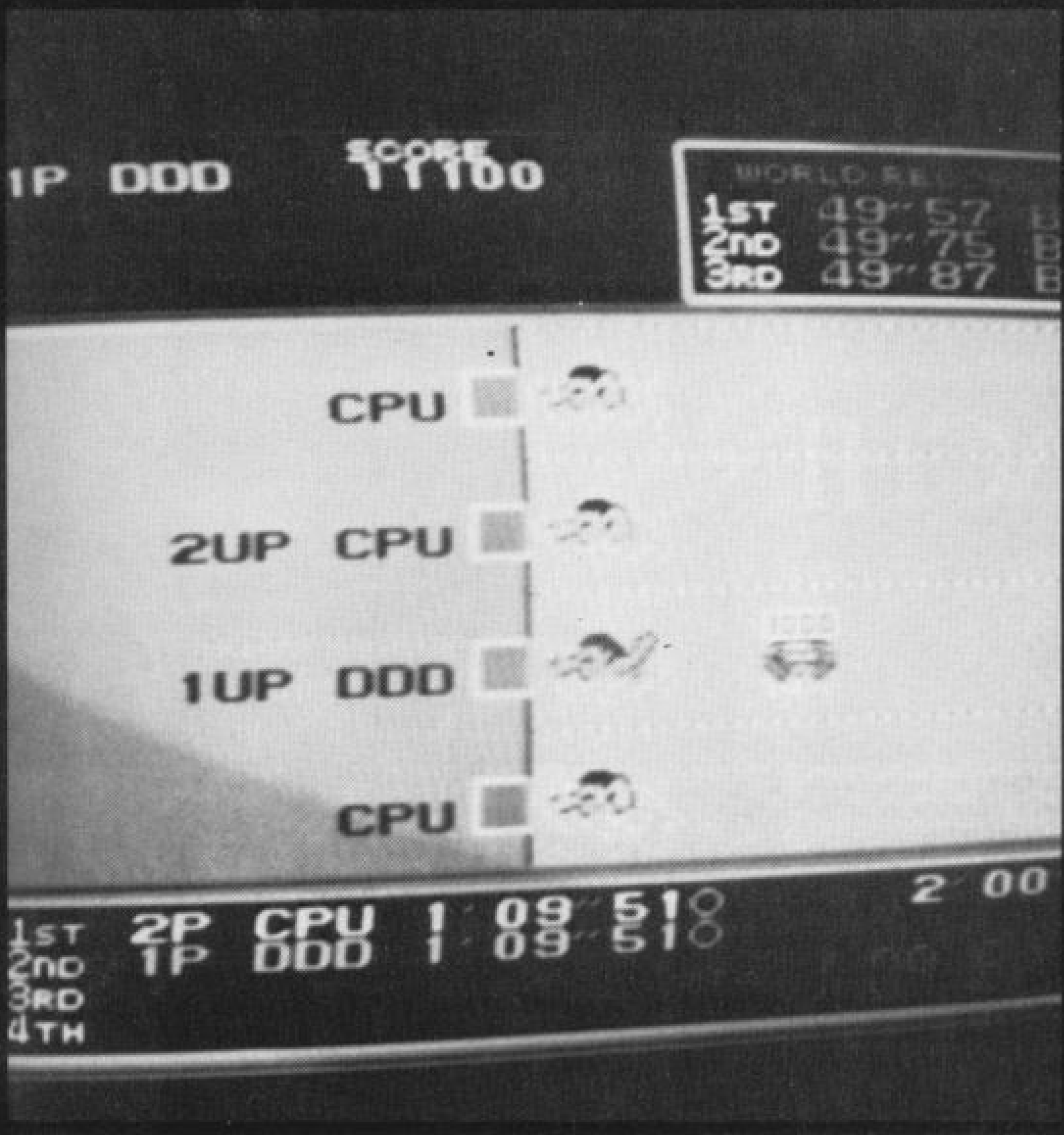
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COMPUTER SOFTWARE

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The strongman works up to lift-off. Note the authentic flat feet and glove puppet jury.



Getting in the swim. The contestant in Lane Three is not waving — he's drowning . . .

target, taking into account — as you are not doubt wont-to do — the wind speed (a handy anemometer at the side of the screen helps you with this one) and angle of release (a handy attendant at the side of the machine refuses to help you wit this one).

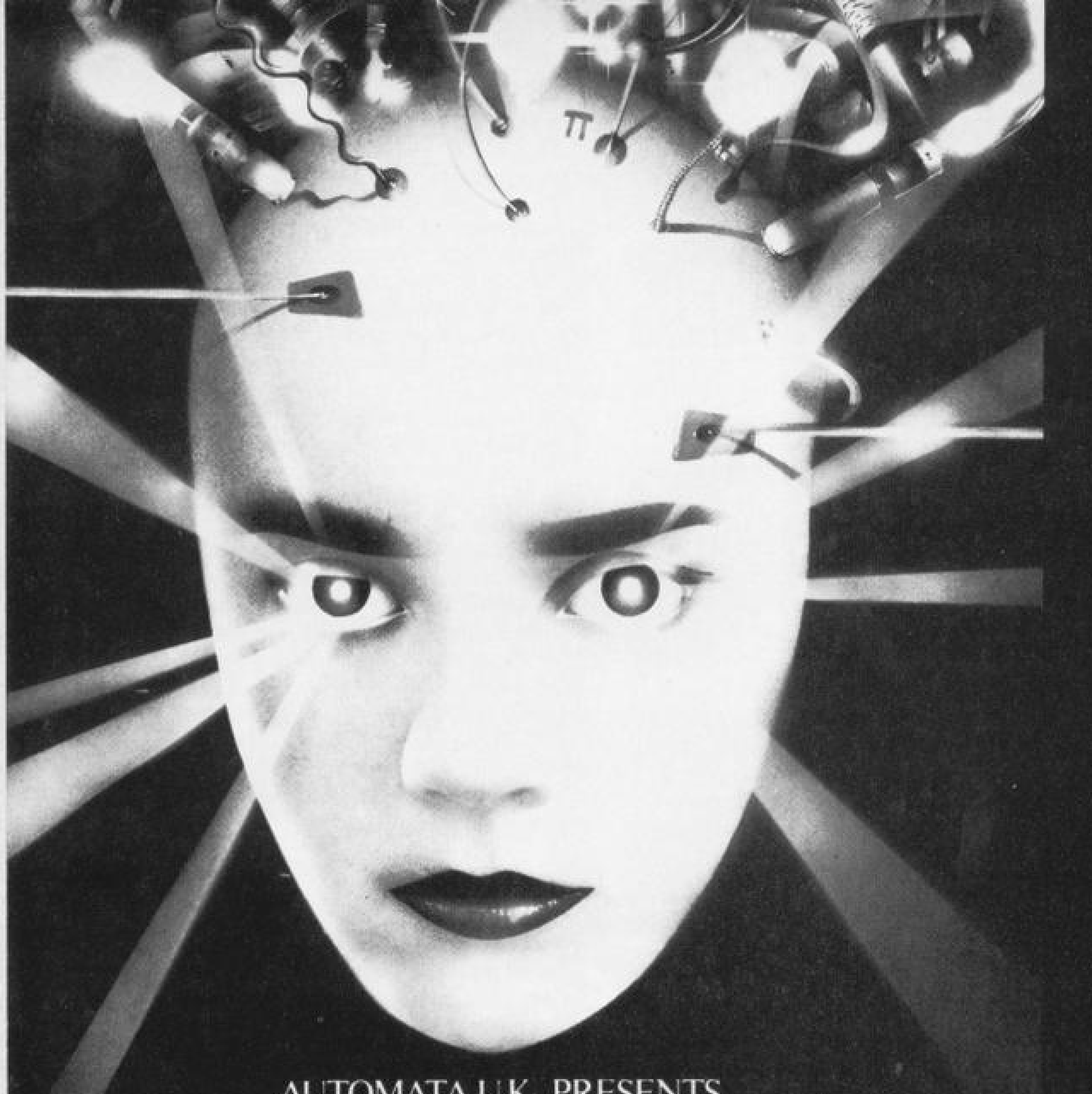
The triple jump has always confounded me; why do people want to do this? Walking is much easier and a lot more graceful. You are advised to press the jump button rhythmically for best effect and optimum take-off. Rest assured — it is easier to put the Space Shuttle into orbit than it is to get your man through to the next round. If you are still standing, if your fingers are still bleeding then the notion of retribution against Konami and the owners of the arcade will swell within you — just as the power surges through the weightlifters in the sixth and penultimate round.

By banging away furiously at the buttons on the facia you can *fill* your redoubtable strongman with enough strength to lift and jerk the dumbells above his head. The green light goes up, the judges wave and lo! you have made a clean snatch! Now do it again. And again. You may start with a respectable 150kg lift but from there on in it gets harder. And heavier. And hernia etc., Compelling as all this is it is as nothing when compared to the pole-vault. The pole-vault is so hard that even brainless attendants will sit in awe-inspired silence as you approach the bar.

The instructions command you to "grasp the player's movements". (sic.) Would there be a judge's inquiry if I did? Run. Press Jump. Thrust the pole into the ground and, concentrating carefully on your timing . . . release the pole. If you don't release the pole then invariably you come to a sticky end. Unfortunately I'll never know the result. I failed a random dope test just seconds before the start of the seventh event. They asked me how much I'd spent on the damn machine. I told them. Then they told me I was a dope and kicked me out for my own good.

Whilst most arcade sequels content themselves with either "harder" or "faster", *Hyper Sports* takes you "higher, faster, further, sharper and harder". It is no easy game. But it was no mean feat putting it together. No doubt before you can state "Seoul in '88" they'll have a follow-up. It's not enough therefore that you are quicker . . . it is imperative that you are trained all round, because *Hyper Sports* runs rings around the Olympics . . .

DAVID DORRELL



AUTOMATA U.K. PRESENTS
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JON PERTWEE
MEL CROUCHER
DONNA BAILEY
and FRANKIE HOWERD in

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WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY MEL CROUCHER

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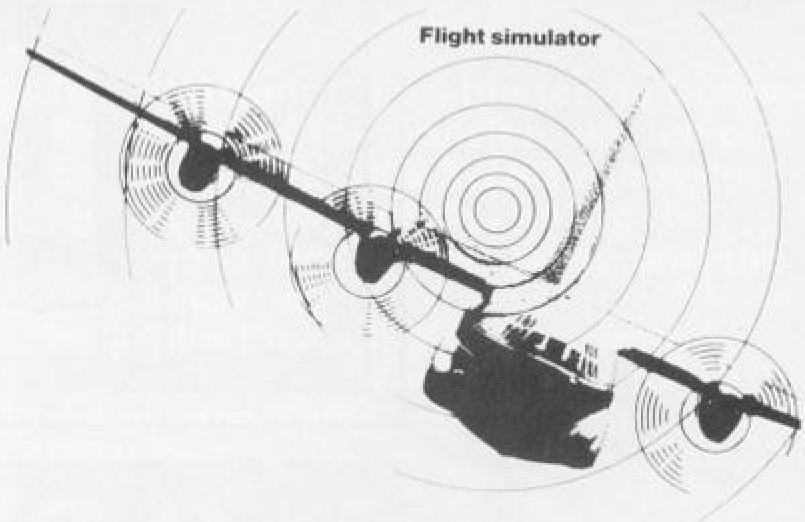
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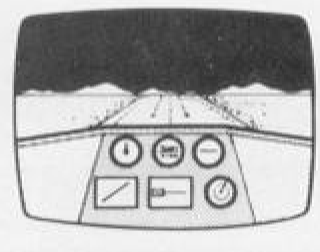


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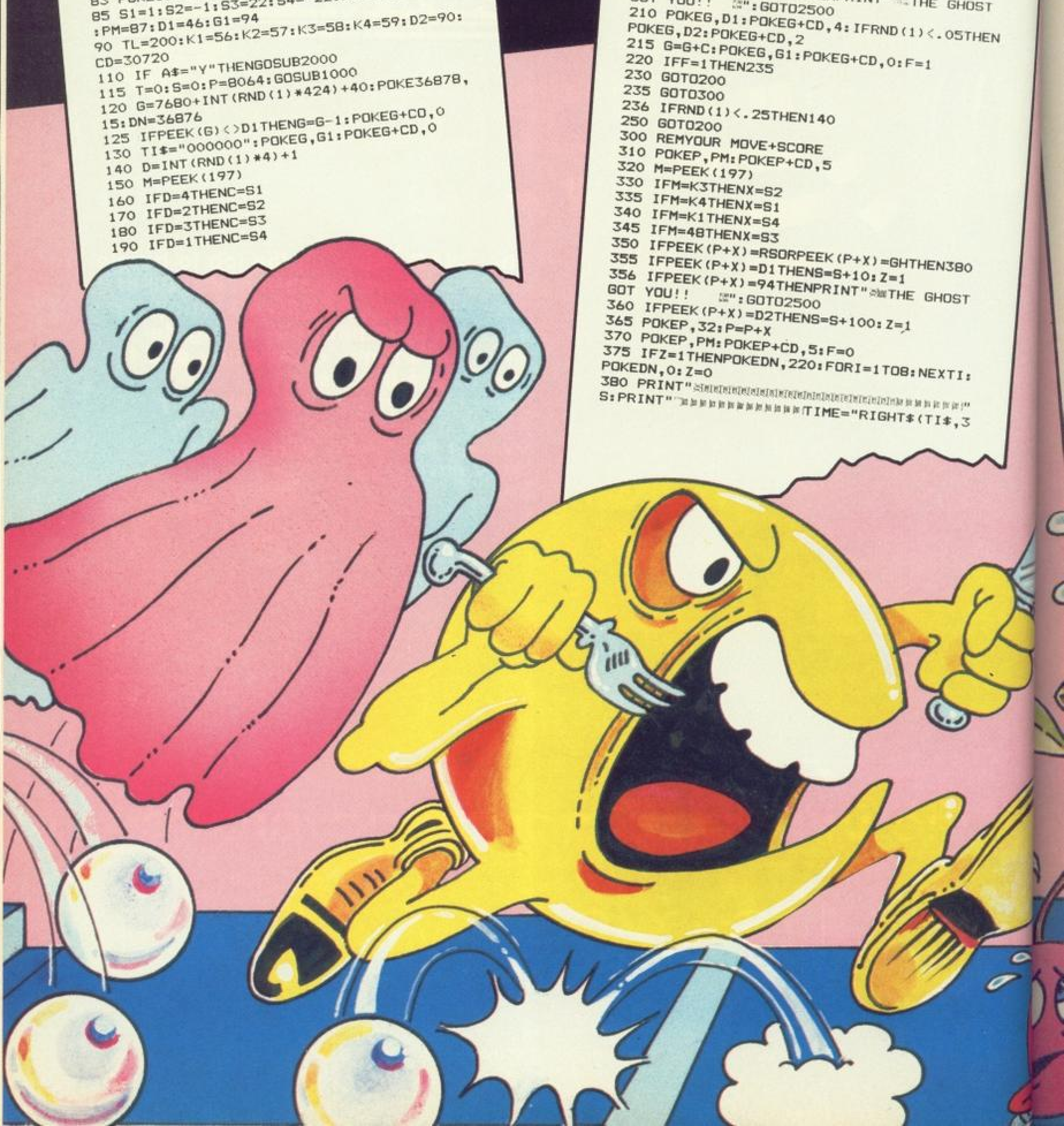
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FRUITB

Good food is one of life's greatest pleasures, so where is it all? Trapped in a tedious concrete maze, surrounded by hostile ghosts who will drain your life energy at the drop of a pixel, and all there is lying around is pills. They keep me going, mind you, but there's something to be said for that juicy citrus stuff that keeps materialising for no good reason. But — sigh! — how's a P-person to get fat around here.

```
0 POKE36879,8
1 REM**BY DAVID GREAHME (C)1983**
2 PRINT"  ":FORA=1TO42:PRINT:FORB=1TO99:N
EXT:IFA=19THENPRINT"          PRESENTS"
3 IFA=17THENPRINT"        DAVID GREAHME"
4 NEXT:POKE36878,15
13 PRINT"  ":POKE36879,10:REMTITLE AND CR
EDITS
20 PRINT"          ----------------"
30 PRINT"          *** PAC-MAN ***  "
35 PRINT"          ---------------"
38 PRINT" GUIDE PAC-MAN THOUGH. THE MAZE
 USING THE    FOLLOWING KEYS TO MOVE"
40 PRINT"      8:RIGHT    6:LEFT"
45 PRINT"      2:UP       Q:DOWN"
50 FORB=1TO19:PRINT:FORB=1TO99:NEXT:IFA=
4THENPRINT"    P A C M A N "
53 PRINT"   SCORING AS FOLLOWS"            =1
55 PRINT"        .=10 POINTS
00 POINTS"
70 PRINT"            HIT A KEY!"
80 GET A$:IFA$=""THEN80
83 POKE36879,26
85 S1=1:S2=-1:S3=22:S4=-22:RS=160:GH=102
:PM=87:D1=46:G1=94
90 TL=200:K1=56:K2=57:K3=58:K4=59:D2=90:
CD=30720
110 IF A$="Y"THENGOSUB2000
115 T=0:S=0:P=8064:GOSUB1000
120 G=7680+INT(RND(1)*424)+40:POKE36878,
15:DN=36876
125 IFPEEK(G)<>D1THENG=G-1:POKEG+CD,0
130 TI$="000000":POKEG,G1:POKEG+CD,0
140 D=INT(RND(1)*4)+1
150 M=PEEK(197)
160 IFD=4THENC=S1
170 IFD=2THENC=S2
180 IFD=3THENC=S3
190 IFD=1THENC=S4
```

```
200 IFPEEK(G+C)=RSORPEEK(G+C)=GHTHEN140
205 IFPEEK(G+C)=PMTHENPRINT"  THE GHOST
GOT YOU!!   ":GOTO2500
210 POKEG,D1:POKEG+CD,4:IFRND(1)<.05THEN
POKEG,D2:POKEG+CD,2
215 G=G+C:POKEG,G1:POKEG+CD,0:F=1
220 IFF=1THEN235
230 GOTO200
235 GOTO300
236 IFRND(1)<.25THEN140
250 GOTO200
300 REMYOUR MOVE+SCORE
310 POKEP,PM:POKEP+CD,5
320 M=PEEK(197)
330 IFM=K3THENX=S2
335 IFM=K4THENX=S1
340 IFM=K1THENX=S4
345 IFM=48THENX=S3
350 IFPEEK(P+X)=RSORPEEK(P+X)=GHTHEN380
355 IFPEEK(P+X)=D1THENS=S+10:Z=1
356 IFPEEK(P+X)=94THENPRINT"  THE GHOST
GOT YOU!!   ":GOTO2500
360 IFPEEK(P+X)=D2THENS=S+100:Z=1
365 POKEP,32:P=P+X
370 POKEP,PM:POKEP+CD,5:F=0
375 IFZ=1THENPOKEDN,220:FORI=1TO8:NEXTI:
POKEDN,0:Z=0
380 PRINT"
S:PRINT"              TIME="RIGHT$(TI$,3
```



BUSTERS!

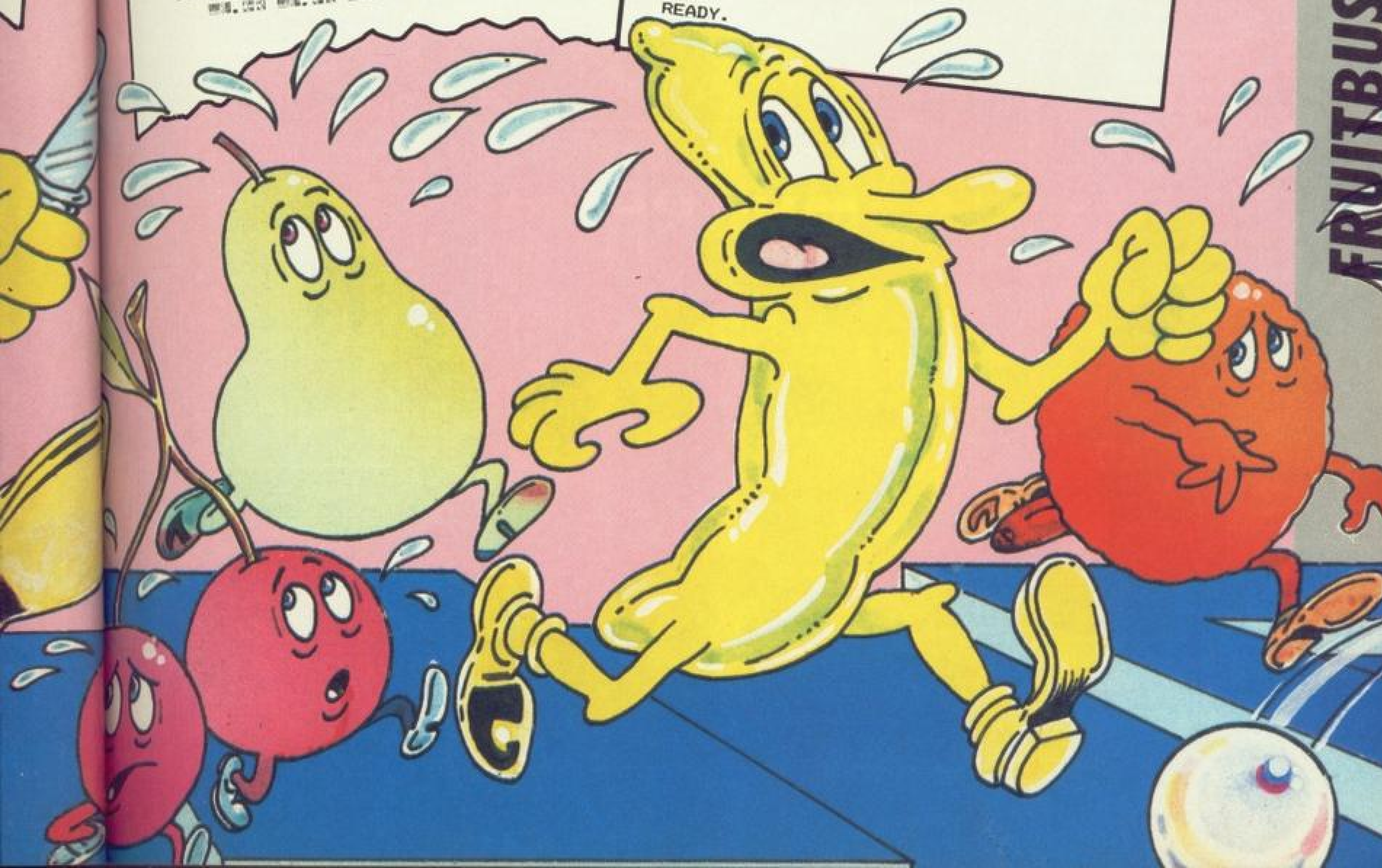
Controls:

Guide P-Man around the maze, collecting energy pills and fruit.
2: Up Q: Down 8: Right 6: Left.

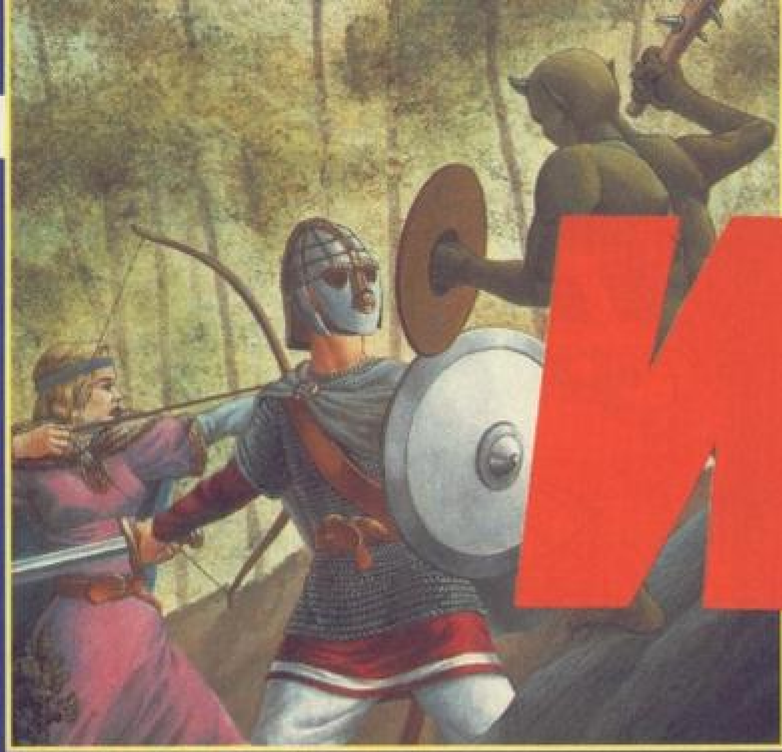


```
)
400 GOTO236
1000 REM SET UP MAZE
1010 PRINT"[illegible]
1020 PRINT"[illegible]..................[illegible]"
1030 PRINT"[illegible]
1040 PRINT"[illegible]...................[illegible]"
1050 PRINT"[illegible]...............[illegible]"
1060 PRINT"[illegible]"
1070 PRINT"[illegible]...........[illegible]"
1080 PRINT"[illegible]"
1090 PRINT"[illegible]"
1100 PRINT"[illegible]..........[illegible]"
1110 PRINT"[illegible]........[illegible]"
1120 PRINT"[illegible]"
1130 PRINT"[illegible]...........[illegible]"
1140 PRINT"[illegible]"
1150 PRINT"[illegible]...............[illegible]"
1160 PRINT"[illegible]"
1170 PRINT"[illegible]"
1180 PRINT"[illegible]..................[illegible]"
1190 PRINT"[illegible]"
1200 PRINT"[illegible]..................[illegible]"
1210 PRINT"[illegible]"
1220 PRINT"SCORE:-"S
1225 RETURN
2120 PRINT"GOOD LUCK"
2500 Z9=36876
2505 POKE36878,12
2510 FOR I=255TO128STEP-1
2520 POKE36878,12:POKEZ9,I
2525 FORZ8=1TO5:NEXTZ8
2530 NEXTI
2535 POKE36878,0
3000 FORI=1TO500:NEXT I:PRINT"[illegible]"
3010 IF S>HSTHENHS=S
3015 PRINT"YOUR SCORE WAS"S
3020 IF S=HSTHENPRINT"[illegible]A NEW HIGH SCORE"
:POKE198,0:INPUT"[illegible]WHAT IS YOUR NAME[illegible]";A$
3030 PRINT"[illegible]HI-SCORE="HS
3035 PRINT"[illegible]BY "A$
3040 POKE198,0:INPUT"[illegible]ANOTHER GAME(Y/N)"
;B$
3050 IF B$="Y"THEN 115
3055 PRINT"[illegible]GOOD BYE.HOPE YOU"
3056 PRINT"[illegible]ENJOYED PLAYING."
3060 END

READY.
```



FRUITBUSTERS! for Unexpanded Vic-20



DORKSLAYER!

WAITING

Adventure-meister STEVE KEATON looks behind the drapes of *The Wrath of Magra,* rescues a victim of *Twin Kingdom Valley* and finds a book . . . while with his other hand . . .

A NOTABLE new Spectrum title is Master Vision's *The Wrath of Magra,* the long-awaited climax to Carnell Software's *Volcanic Dungeon* and Black Crystal Third Continent saga. For a time it looked as if this epochal enterprise would never get to see the light of day, as Magra's software house kicked the can just as she was entering the home straight. All looked lost until those gallant Elves down at Mastertronic stepped in with a reprieve. Brandishing a cut-price want they created an in-house adventure label, which allowed the phoenix-like *Magra* to live anew.

BOOK AND TAPE

"They arrived like the 7th Cavalry." recalls *Magra's* co-author Stuart Galloway. "Things started to turn rotten in January '84 and then promptly collapsed in April. The game was actually finished at that point. We'd even sent a few copies out. Developing it was straight-forward, it was the manufacturing side of the business that finally broke the camel's back."

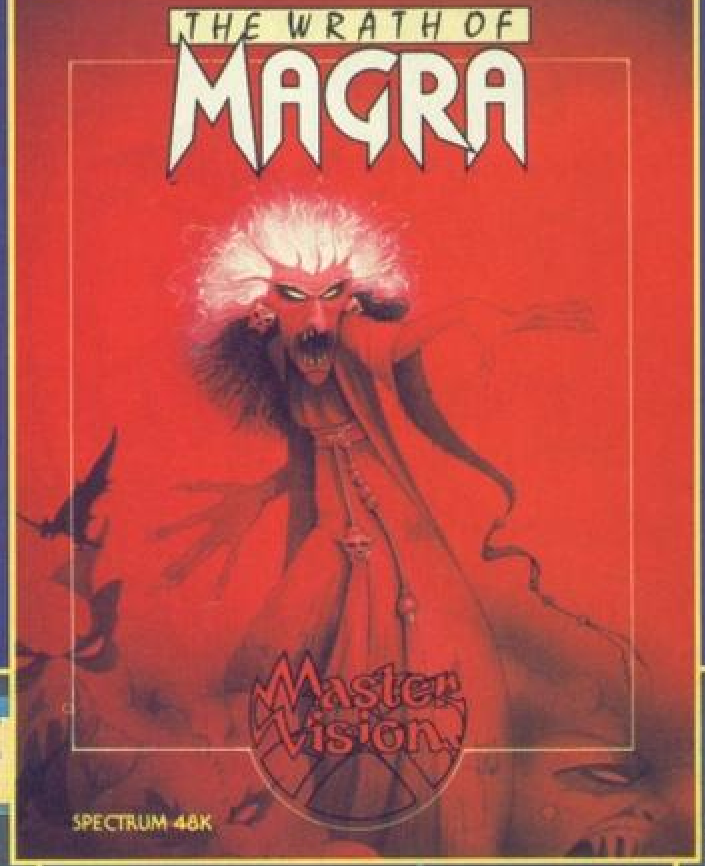
Magra is a remarkably accessible adventure. It's a prog of only moderate difficulty which sprawls across 3 tapes and comes bundled with *The Book Of Shadows;* a weighty 158-page tome that details pretty much the entire history of Carnell's imaginary Third Continent. Along with a history lesson, it speculates on *Magra's* dodgy denizens and even lists a mountain of spells to combat them. Delightfully illustrated with Trolls, Hobgoblins and the like, it's a great read. Few adventures go to such extravagant lengths to establish their credibility.

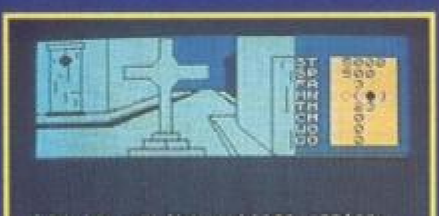
Magra's prologue begins deep beneath the earth, in the dark, dank, worm-ridden vault of Dominian (a locale not unlike the BIG K office). In your guide as the Knight of the Star Jewel and Hero of the Volcanic Dungeon, you've been brought below by an elfin wizard who claims to have something of interest up his sleeve. Naturally you're curious. The old wizard guides you to a stout wooden door and beckons a timourous guard for a key. The lackey hands it over with obvious apprehension. With a rusty groan the portal opens and the wizard ushers you in. Shackled to a dank slab is the Princess Edora, her once beautiful face aflame with sores and her hair awash with dandruff. The sight understandably makes you groan (not least because you've only just rescued the stupid woman from The Volcanic Dungeon). "She's possessed by the soul of Magra!" the wizard declares. This also comes as something of a shock as you thought the old witch had perished in the previous game! 'Twould seem that you've little choice but to venture back into the Black Mountains and slug it out with the old bat for a second time. Your reputation (not to mention the soul of the Princess Edora) hangs on the line.

As you might expect of a multi-load adventure you're unable to play it out of sequence. You'll need the data given to you at the end of episode 1 in order to play episode 2, and so on. There's no chance of jumping the gun. The game commences in the valley below Magra's Black Mountains, where armed with only a silver sword, shield and a couple of trinkets you must beg, borrow or steal all the materials you'll need for the mission. When suitably attired you must find your way into the mines beneath the mountains. In episode 2 you must negotiate a dangerous labyrinth. A map is provided in the accompanying booklet to help you survive the journey. Chasms abound so one false move could spell NEW. Episode 3 takes you inside Magra's fortress, where you'll play a deadly game of hide 'n' seek. Naturally the place is crawling with yuks and the peril quota's frighteningly high. SAVE as you go, is the motto.

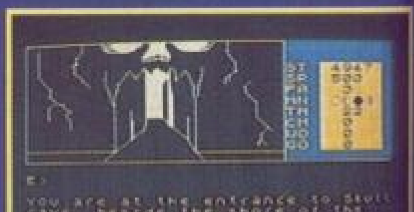
BIGGER, BETTER

"It's a huge advance on both *Volcanic Dungeon* and *Black Crystal,"* declares Stuart. "They were originally written in BASIC, although they've been improved since then. I know that *Magra* looks fairly ordinary, but in fact it's very complex. There are little routines churning away in the background all the time. They consult your physical status, monitor the phase of the moon, and check the time. They're constantly updating data regardless of what you're doing. The evolution routine used in episode 3 is particularly sophisticated. It enables the computer to decide exactly what kind of monster you'll meet as you wander about the fortress.











GFOR MAGRA



We're very pleased with the way it's turned out. The Spectrum tends to be a bjt quirky but the rules are quite strict. You should never encounter anything invincible."

The screen display for each episode is quite different. Only part 1 features the familiar status table / graphic window / description mode. The graphics consist mainly of simple line drawings and appear with only modest speed. They can be toggled off although there's the little point. The text descriptions are far too sparse to stand on their own. "During the 9 month lay-off we spent quite a lot of time trying to speed the graphics up," explains Stuart. "I think the results are perhaps 70% successful. There are a few disappointments. A certain amount of complexity had to be sacrificed from the original design. We were constantly condensing the routines and eventually managed to get them down to 12K, but it was still a compromise. In many ways graphics have stifled adventure development. They've become too important. But I guess you can't expect people to look at text all the time. Even Tolkein had illustrations. Personally I think the most important ingredient in an adventure is plot. That's what gives it individuality. Roy (Carnell) and I never intended Magra to be fiercely complex. The idea was to make it true to life (?). You begin as Joe Hero, rather inept and inexperienced, then (as you become more familiar with *The Book of Shadows*) you grow wiser and stronger. It's certainly not traditional in the sense of their only being one solution. In fact we estimate that there's more than 3 million ways to complete the game! You can rush straight through it and kill Magra if you want, although you'll be missing the point".

MAGRA CLONES

Stuart assures me that *Magra* is destined to appear on a number of micros. "A version for the 64 is imminent," he claims, "and there are more in the pipeline. Stephen Kirk, one of the team, has just developed a highly sophisticated adventure generator. At the push of a button it can produce customised code for almost any machine. The Spectrum, CBM54, MSX, Apple . . . you name it. It's a wonderful device, and it's totally flexible. A customised version of Magra at almost the touch of a button! Imagine that. It's development was made possible by the MasterVision deal. Don't expect us to put it on sale though! No one could afford to buy it! Believe me, it proved very expensive to develop. Still it's a state of the art tool and will really push us forward. The amount of time it saves is incredible! And it means we never have to work on the CBM64 again! That machine really is a pig to program! I'm sure the generator (we haven't christened it yet) will pay for itself very quickly."

BOOKQUEST

Peter Martin, from Washington, Tyne and Wear could doubtless do with such a machine himself. Apparently he's having trouble writing an adventure on his 64 and would like us to recommend a book or tape under £7.00 to bail him out. Well Pete, Big Kolleague John (mine's a pint) Conquest recently declared the softback *Exploring Adventures on the Commodore 64* to be a cut above the average, and I'm prepared to get behind that. Written by Peter Gerrard it'll cost you a mere £6.95. Alternatively if you can stretch your budget by a tad (if not more) Gilsoft's *Quill* utility for the 64 comes very highly recommended. It's a program development system without par and is well worth the £14.95 price tag. It's also worth checking our program listings. These can be typed in and customised for negligible cost. Let us know how you get on.

Finally, before I vanish in my customary puff of acrid green smoke, a quick word to Philip Milner of Tolladine, Worcester: If you think you can court favour with gratuitous, slobbering praise . . . then you're quite perceptive, my friend. Adulation is always gratefully received. Ciao for now.

VALLEY VICTIM

Mark Finch, of Highbury in London, has problems. Frankly, I'm not surprised. Anybody that staples a postage stamp onto an envelope is bound to have problems!

Apparently he's incarcerated deep within *Twin Kingdom Valley* (from Bug-Byte), and wants help. "I can't get past the ravine," he cries. "And I can't get oput of the prison and I can't kill the gorilla." Not having much luck are you, Mark? Sounds like a job for the Dorkslayer! In order to cross the ravine, you'll need the small wooden rod. Examine it carefully and then try waving it around. As for the prison, well you've got the right idea but your input's wrong. Try GIVE GUARD DIAMOND (simple when you know how isn't it?). That should get you out. Finally, leave the gorilla alone! Sheesh. Apes have feelings too y'know. If the problems persist you'd do well to invest a £1.00 in the *Adventure Players' Guide* (also from Bug-Byte). This handy little booklet takes a detailed look at the world and puzzles of *Twin Kingdom Valley* as well as giving tips on adventuring in general. Incidentally Spectrum owners can now enter the Valley as Bug-Byte have recently converted it for their micro. Initially entry was restricted to owners of the BBC/Electron and the Commodore 64.

TWIN KINGDOM VALLEY (Bug-Byte) Commodore 64, BBC B, Electron, £9.50, Spectrum 48K £7.95

THE WRATH OF MAGRA (MasterVision) Spectrum 48K £9.95

THE QUILL (Gilsoft) Spectrum 48K, Commodore 64 £14.95

EXPLORING ADVENTURES ON THE COMMODORE 64 (published by Duckworth) £6.95

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Secrets Wait

No. 10 SPACE INVADERS (Taito /Ata

STEVE KEATON delves into th inner complexities of THE Classic Game . . .

("THUMP THUMP")
Few video games have transcended the arcade to become part of contemporary culture.

("THUMP THUMP THUMP")
Hardly any have been so totally absorbed that their handles are now part of the English language.

("THUMPTHUMPTHUMP-THUMP")
Only one can claim to have a soundtrack that's raised more hackles than the theme from Jaws.

("PFFURTTT")

FOLLOWING ITS creation early '78 by Japanese developers Taito, and its distribution via Bally Midway, *Space Invaders* has become the generic term to describe any kind of electronic entertainment. Just think about that for a second. For a game to have that kind of monumental impact is simply staggering. It turned screen entertainment irretrievably on its head and quite literally led to a much reported coin shortage in the far east!

Today there can be absolutely no one that doesn't recognise a Space Invader when he sees one. The screen (black and white with a transparent colour overlay), choc-a-bloc with bomb-dropping aliens marching relentlessly toward four slowly crumbling green bunkers and one somewhat small and overworked laserbase, is indelibly etched in all our minds. The object of the game (apart from just staying alive) was to crank up as many points as possible by wasting an alien Mother Ship that sporadically floats across the top of the screen. Heightening the drama was the infamous thumping heartbeat that builds to a crescendo as the dastardly aliens move in for the final stomp.

Contrary to popular belief though, *Space Invaders* was NOT a mindless shoot 'em up. If it was, its impact would never have been so huge. No, it was a game of skill and strategy that could raise the adrenalin of any player (remember this was back in the good ol' days when people actually had to fight for their points instead of just hacking in witless invincibility POKEs).

Count to 22 . . .

Foremost amongst these strategies, as every Space Jock worth his salt will know, was The Count. Mega-scores in *Space Invaders* were not earned through rapid-fire gonzo blasterama or even greased digits, they came from counting out the laser blasts. Space Aces would count out their shots until they reached number

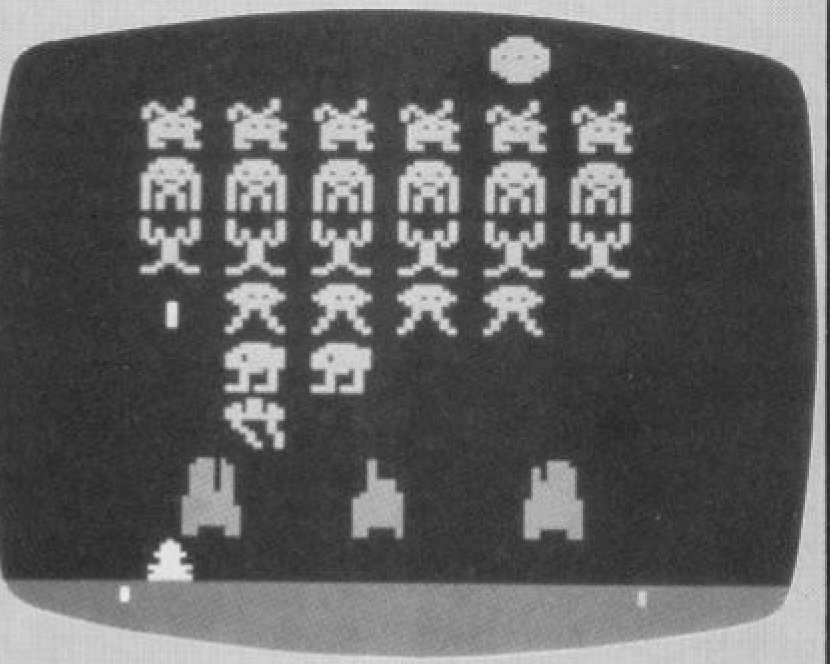
of a Space Jock: Trim and Count

22, then wait, patiently, carefully until the Mother Ship appeared. She'd then be tracked and zapped with the magic 23rd shot, thereby racking up a massive 300 point bonus, the maximum possible for the Big M. Quite a score when you consider that the standard pay-off is either 50, 100 or 150 points. The jackpot would appear again 15 shots later. Bag the Mother with every 15th shot and your points would begin to go through the roof! After the first sheet there's another count of 23 before you settle into a nice cosy run of 15. If you think that this sounds nice and easy, just try counting down under the relentless pressure of an alien attack! It only takes one fluff to flush the whole strategy straight down the john.

In the Trim

Somewhat easier is The Trim. The object here is to slow down the descent rate of the entire invading army. Needless to say this is not achieved by carelessly picking-off of individual xtros but by calmly keeping the group from reaching the screen edge (which causes them to descend and thus quicken their pace). The Trim involves removing an entire wing at a time thus effectively increasing the distance that they have to travel. This tactic, undoubtedly the most obvious anti-invader move, enables even the most cack-handed space cadet to clear some screens.

The third strategy — and the trickiest to execute effectively — is The Wait. It works on the premise that no invader, however mean and despicable, will bomb you on the next to last rung (that's the one above your base). Sure they'll drop bombs if you're only looking, but that's actually just a bluff! Sit beneath 'em and grit your teeth and they'll go as soft as sausages. I guess theoretically that it's possible to take out an entire army this way, although I've never seen it done. Most nerves would doubtless crumble under the strain. Accuracy of course is paramount as you'll get no second chance. As you might imagine those Starfighters capable of rows. Whittle down the invading aliens to one of these characters and you'll be treated to the extraordinary sight of an attacking alien leaving a white light slime trail! Needless to say the effect is rarely seen because the requirements are so difficult to meet. If you don't believe me, go unearth a Space Invader and try and knock out the top row without hitting the



merging all three strategies were pretty much assured of invader immortality. The Count offers ludicrously high scores, while The Trim and The Wait ensure longevity (of a sort).

A nice (and little known) twist in the game involved in a neat graphic routine buried deep within the machine's code. It was magical reward for the invader elite from the Taito programmers. The routine would only occur if the final invader left onscreen was a recruit from one of the bottom two

bottom. It demands mucho skill and perfect anticipation. You'll need to lead the advancing alien line and time your shots in such a way that they collide with the poor slobs on the upper tier. *Manic Miner*? Pah, that's kid stuff compared to this!

Space Invaders not only revolutionised the arcade scene, it also brought the video game home with a vengeance! The news that Atari were to launch it as a VCS cart caused a rush on 2600 consoles. Indeed this was the game that finally forced me to dig deep into my pockets and shell out for one. Even today I reckon it as one of their most successful conversions. The addictive menace of the original is authentically conveyed even though the two games actually play very differently. In VCS form the invading army has been reduced from 55 Ugs per sheet to 36 and all have been redrawn. Only their table manners remain the same. Neither the Count nor The Wait carry much weight here, which leaves only The Trim as a workable strategy. The aliens attack faster and your laser shots are slower. Arcade players were forced to do a drastic rethink.

The cart boasts an astonishing 112 variations (an unbroken record) and incorporates such thrills as moving shields, zigzagging and rapid fire bombs and (my favourite all time variation) invisible invaders! I've always thought that anybody that willingly sits before a blank screen to battle invisible invaders is rather more than just severely shell-shocked. Atari (obviously hyped up by their success) then went on to produce the ultimate home version for their 400/800 computer range. Once again the coin-op strategies didn't amount to a hill o' beans, but the play was . . . dazzling.

Since then *Space Invaders* has gone on to become the most shamelessly ripped-off game of all time. Grossly inferior versions proliferate for almost every machine (hands up those with a *Space Invaders* wrist-watch!) and this has caused it to be frequently and undeservedly rubbished by the less enlightened youth of today. At Big K however, we remember; and thus know better.

("PTOOIIEE PTOOIIE FAPH")

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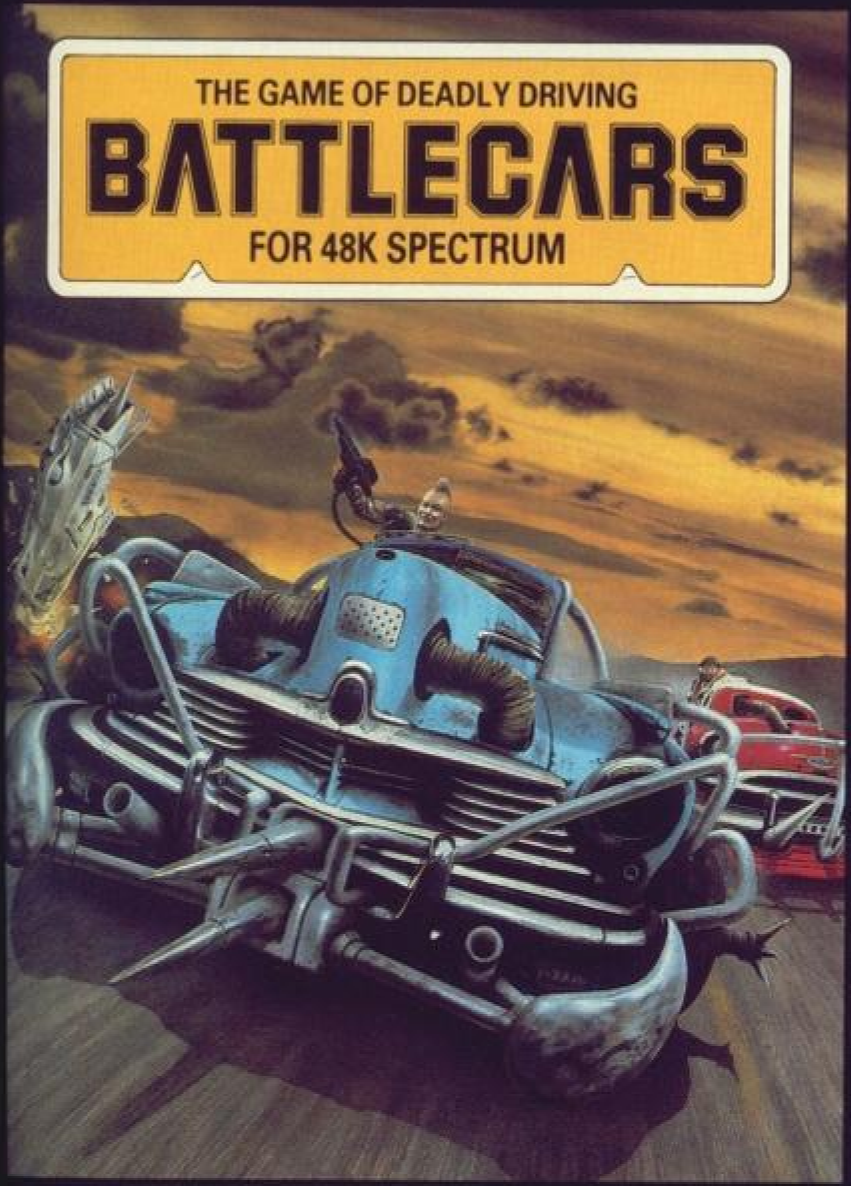
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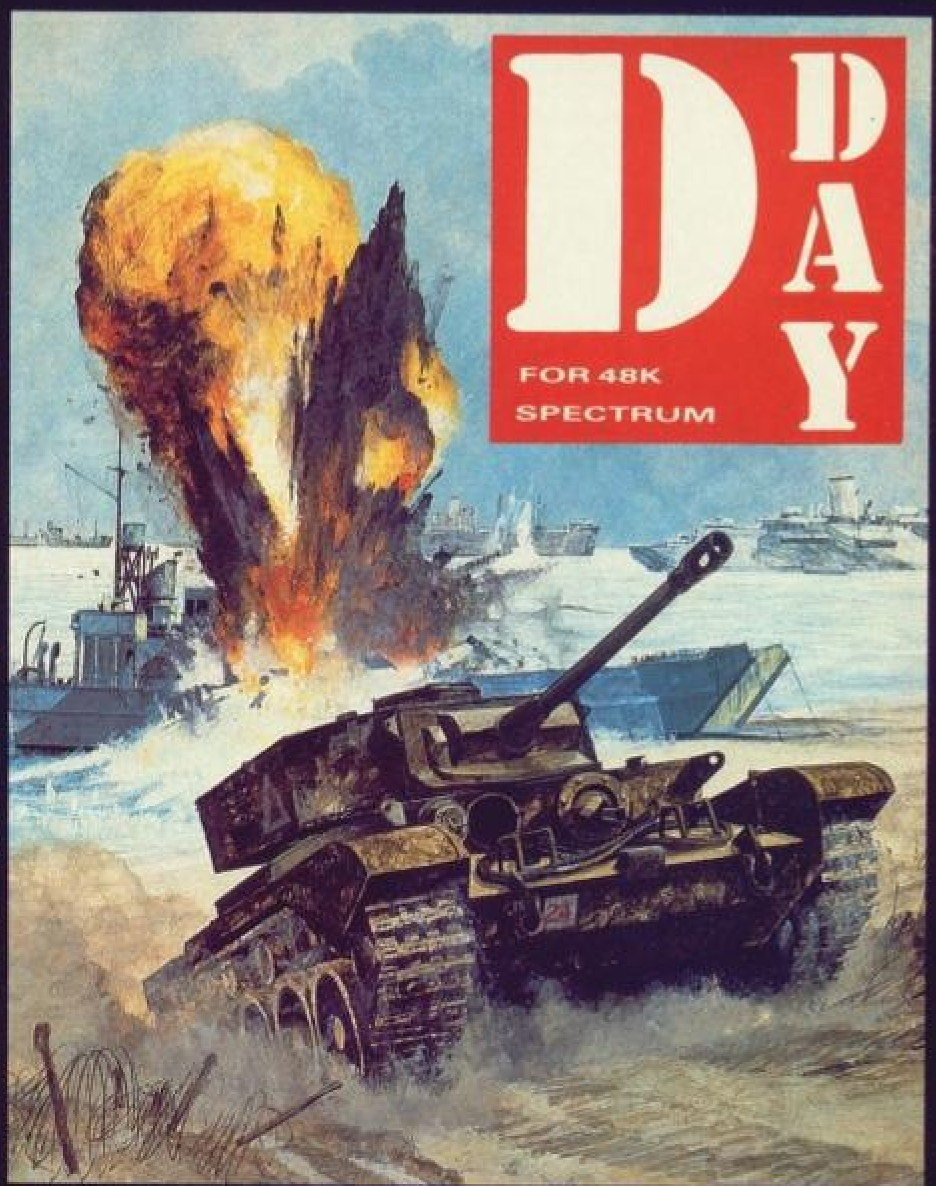
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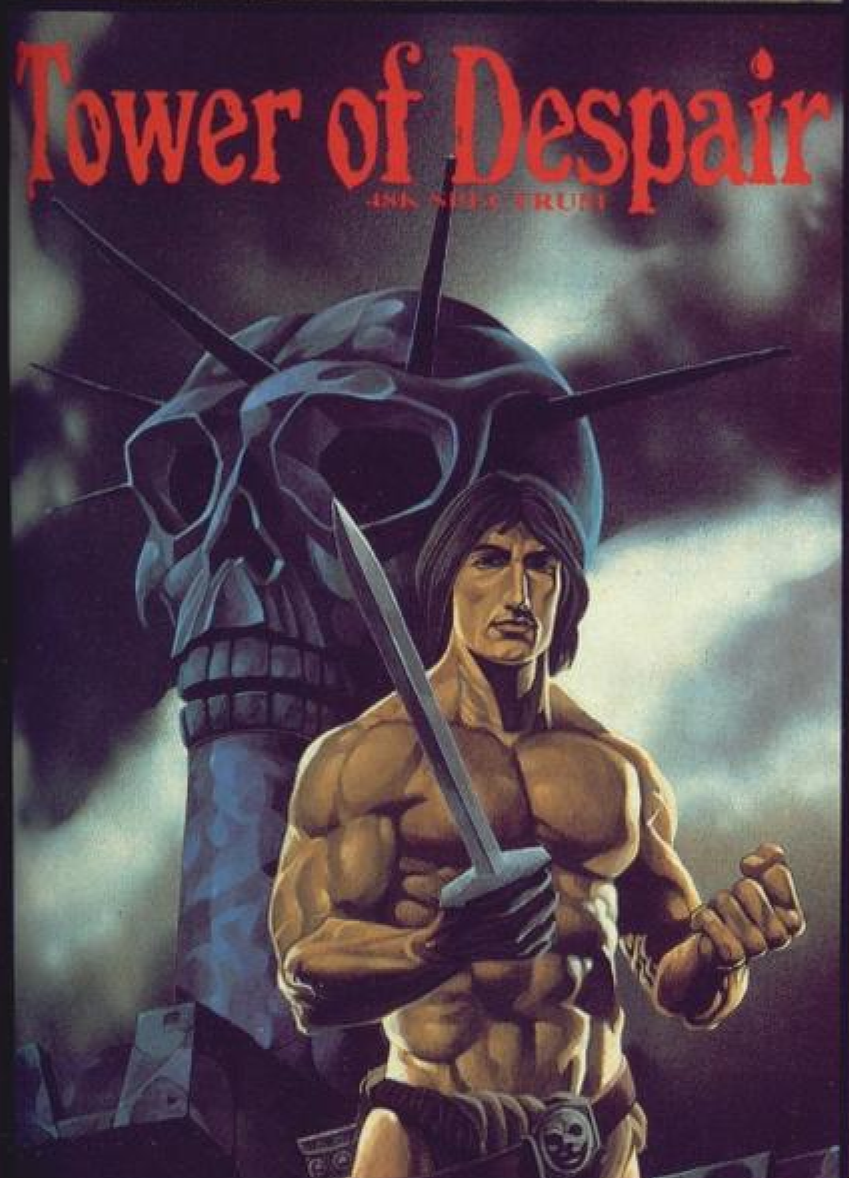
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BUT.. BUT
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Scend your Scenario to . . .

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One of these men is an ex Imagine programmer working for Iron Filings. The other is either Xikluna or The Shadow. But which is which? Will we ever know?

FLEE THE FLOOD

Here's a game I wrote in BASIC, for Spectrum 16/48K. The idea is that there has been a flood and your house is drifting towards a forest. You have to pass 100 trees before-you reach dry land.

LEE MACEY,
Hornchurch,
Essex.

```
  10 BORDER 5: BRIGHT 1: PAPER 5
 100 LET a$="+"
 110 LET n = 0
 120 LET a = 0
 130 LET b = 0
 140 LET c = 0
 150 LET d = 0
 160 LET t = 1
 170 LET x = 12
 180 LET r = INT (27*RND )
 190 PRINT AT 21,r; INK (4*RND )
; a$
 200 POKE 23692, 255
 210 PRINT AT 21, 31; "  "
 220 BEEP .3, 0
 230 PRINT AT 10, x-2 ;"     "
 240 PRINT AT 11, X;"█"
 250 PRINT AT 21, 31;"  "
 260 LET n = n+t
 270 IF n = 100 THEN PRINT "YOU
HAVE REACHED DRY LAND": STOP
 280 IF n = 104 THEN LET t = 2
 290 LET e = d
 300 LET d = c
 310 LET c = b
 320 LET b = a
 330 LET a = r
 340 PRINT AT 10, x-2; "     "
 350 PRINT AT 11;X;"█"
 360 IF x >= e-2 AND x <= e+t THE
N GO TO 410
 370 BEEP .2, 5
 380 IF INKEY$ = "5" THEN LET X
= X-T
 390 IF INKEY$ = "8" THEN LET X
=X+T
 400 GO TO 180
 410 PRINT AT 11, x-1; "CRASH"
 420 PRINT AT 0, 0; "SCORE = ";n
 430 BEEP 2, -12
 440 PRINT AT 21, 0;"PRESS ANY K
EY TO TRY AGAIN"
 450 IF INKEY$ = "" THEN GO TO 4
50
 460 RUN
```

Here's a tip for Commodore owners everywhere: Whilst loading, type in the normal load procedure. After ,8 — type a colon and press SHIFT and RUN/STOP. Your program will run automatically.

FEARGHAL PATTERWELL,
Clonakilty,
County Cork.

P.S. BIG K is top of the list, (geddit?).

• *Well, Fearghal, that one wasn't much better than a POKE in the eye with a sharp stick, was it?*

LETTERBASE 8 contained a request from A. Gatner for unlimited lives in Ocean's *Moon Alert*. The closest you can get is 99 lives! Enter the following in the basic program at the beginning, just before the Rand USR: POKE 42404,63.

By the way, 63 is HEX for 99. You can have any number of lives below this number.

BRYAN JOHNSON,
Sunderland,
Tyne and Wear.

PROTECTION RACKET

The 'Protector!' feature in issue 8 was very clever and useful. But in listing two, if you set the lines in the bottom half of the screen back to 2 (before CLS or INPUT statements) it is possible to put a STOP statement in INPUT and then see the listing on the screen. The 'Protector!' was supposed to stop this. So how can you stop anyone putting the STOP command in INPUT?

PHIL JOHNSON,
Prescot
Merseyside.

• *It's dead easy, Phil. You can't. 'Protector!' is intended to keep out the casual nosey parker. Not a lot can be done to put off the fully fledged saboteur — like you!*

MINER LIVES

Please advise me on how to get everlasting lives in *Manic Miner*, (Spectrum). Also, which is the best Star Trek game for the Spectrum?

ALBERT FINDLEY,
Cleethorpes,
South Humberside.

Please send me POKE cammands for everlasting lives on *Manic Miner*, for the ZX Spectrum. Please hurry, every day is frustration!

EARL RONALD TAYLOR,
(No address — no £££'s!)

**Oh, all right then. Shovel in the Miner's loader just up to line 25. The type in; POKE 35136,0. Now press ENTER and RUN, and start the tape again. Dig?*

BRING ME MY PEDESTAL, PLEASE

Tell Steven Craig (LETTERBASE 8) that until he has read 'The 24 part Home Computer Course' he has no right to call Big K boring. If he does read the above, he may find himself compelled to paint all his BIG Ks gold, stick them on a pedestal, and worship them occasionally.

THE BLACK TURNIP,
Mixenden.
Halifax.

• *Listen' Turnip, Craig's point was that he actually **LIKED** BIG K. Incidentally, have you tried Clive Splurrt's **1,000 Exciting Nights of Exercises in Machine Code?** Published by Messrs Yawn and Scratch, it's a really good read. Write and tell us about the most fatuous and boring computer book you've ever had the pleasure of putting down.*

edited by NICKY XIKLUNA

"WE CAN'T WIN" CORNER

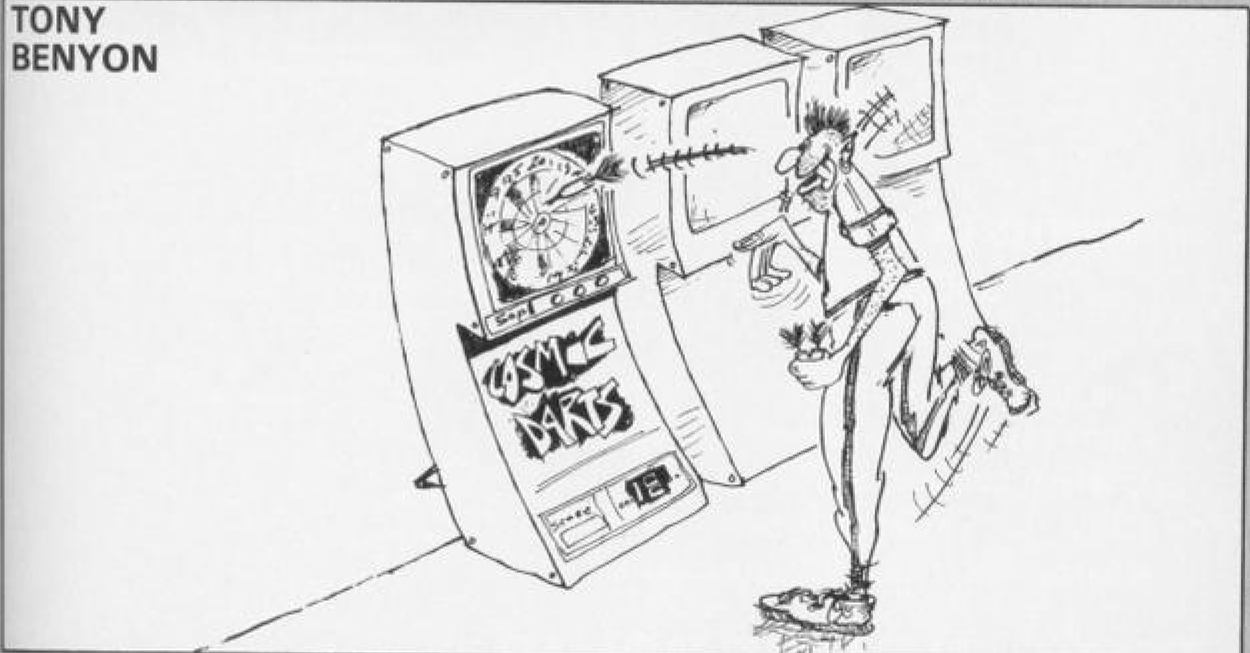
I typed Jet Set Willy — The Last Poke (LETTERBASE 7 — Mark Charlton) into my friend's Spectrum. When the game loaded, we discovered that it does not suck you up walls or give infinite lives. Is there a statement that does this?
GARRY NAYLOR,
Skipton,
North Yorkshire.

I am writing to say how pleased I was to see *Jet Set Willy*—The last Poke — in the October edition! I've been looking for something like this for ages. Has anyone got a similar code for *Manic Miner* on the Spectrum?
PAUL GOSLING,
Waltham Abbey,
Essex.

SNOBS FIGHT BACK

I am writing in response to Trevor O'Grady's in LETTERBASE 8, Computer Snob Wars — Early Warning. Why shouldn't the Spectrum be persecuted for its useless keyboard? Or the CBM 64 for its naff BASIC? Incidentally, should the figure '64' be taken as representing its 64K RAM? Nonsense. The 64 has only roughly half of that useable in BASIC. The figure must surely represent the year that the 64 was designed! I do agree with old Trev on his point about the BBC, though. It got the best BASIC — when it came out. And now? It's surprising that it doesn't use valves! Thank you for letting me get this off my chest.
MARC TEALE,
Eccleshill,
Bradford.

TONY BENYON



OR DO THEY?

I completely agree with Trevor O'Grady's dislike of the 'computer snob wars.' I'm fed up with 'Spaztrums' and 'Commodores'.

I want to warn people about a few Commodore games that I've bought. The worst of these is Rabbit's Adventure Pack 1. It is the most boring game I have ever seen! There are no graphics at all. Worst of all you can break into listing and read it. Quicksilva's *Aquaplane* and *Harrier Attack* are also thoroughly boring.
ROBERT WILLOUGHBY,
Dunsford,
Devon.

SORRY — YOUR (INTER)FACE WON'T FIT

Is it possible to use my Amstrad monitor with my Spectrum? What do I need? Where can I get it? How much will it cost?
S.A. SCHILD,
Camberley,
Surrey.

• No. Nothing. You can't. It doesn't. Your only option is to find someone who knows what he's doing with a soldering iron.

UPPER CLASS TWITTER

Just a line to say that after playing *Elite* for 16 days (well, not all the time) I have now reached the rank of Elite.
BRETT A. WRIGHT,
Salendine Nook,
Huddersfield.

GRID STUNNER

Psst! Want to know how to plan Spectrum screen layouts cheaply? Sling out your graph paper and Print 'n' Plot pad and get a 'Quadrille' exercise book from W.H. Smith's educational area.

It has 40 pages, printed both sides with a fine grid of 33 × 26 squares. Size of page: 205 × 165mm. Size of squares: 6 × 6mm. Price: 22p. Beat that!
FRANK ADEY,
Wolverhampton

DEFEND SMALL MICROS & FROGS

I've been reading BIG K since issue two. It has lots of colour, and is humorous and interesting. Many computer publications on sale are only fit for use as toilet rolls (and even then, are rough and expensive).

I object to TT's verdict on *FROGGER* (issue 7). I'm quite good at it—but I'm not an "obnoxious 9 year old"!!, I, too, like pond life, but surely the object is to save frogs, not squash them?

Finally, a few years back I seem to remember seeing a machine called a Commodore Max in a mail order catalogue. As far as I can remember it had a 2K memory, colour and sound and a touch-sensitive keyboard, (like the Intellivision hand controls). It sold alongside the CBM 64. Also, I definitely saw the Atari 5200 in another catalogue. You said it was never sold in the U.K.
CHRIS DOWNS,
Rochford,
Essex.

• The 5200 never was sold in the UK—officially, that is. That's not to say the occasional hopeful importer didn't burn his fingers on an on-the-cuff basis. Or maybe you were looking at a US catalogue? As for not squashing frogs, clearly I've been getting the wrong message all this time. **T.T.**

ShOrc HORROR!

I decided to buy *Orc Attack* after reading your review (August issue, no. 5). I sent off the cheque, waited 21 days and sure enough, through my letterbox *Orc Attack* came. After a few hours hacking, I thought to myself 'Hang about, is this the same *Orc Attack* as that of the Big K review? Hastily, I re-read it. I checked the cartridge. Yup. *Orc Attack* on there. It says *Orc Attack* on the box and instructions. It even says *Orc Attack* on the screen.

So why have I got rocks instead of spears? Why don't I have a farm to buy? Why have I only got one screen? Why is it that however many lives I gain, I get murdered in round nine?

P.S. Why have you got such a long address?
SIMON QUIRKE,
Wembley,
Middx.

• Um, I don't know how to tell you this Simon, but "buy the farm" is a piece of slang that Tony Tyler swiped from the RAF, circa World War 2. It means spreading yourself thin over the landscape—ie biting the dust to go and push up the daisies. However, you're right about the spear. There isn't one. Glad to see you're on your toes.

There IS only one screen in Orc Attack, but different waves of rampaging attackers. As for getting killed on level nine — the folks at Creative Sparks say, "keep trying".

P.S. 'Coz with a name as long as mine — you deserve one.

ZIP CODE

. . . Who will be the survivors? MIKE GOLD assesses . . .

License Those Wash-out Blues Away

BY NOW, most micro-nuts have slapped down their Christmas boodle, and the only question left is "Who is likely to survive the Wash-Out of 1984?"

Well the answer won't be comming for a while, but we can take this opportunity to check the water.

The big trend in software this past year has been in the realm of licensed games, and those companies that bet on the right properties just might make it to 1985.

It isn't easy. In 1983, Atari bet the house on such movies as *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *E.T.* — two of the most successful films in history. It seemed like a good idea at the time; too bad they became the biggest turkeys in videogame history.

So 1984's corporate players are being slightly more judicious, and are backing their bets with huge promotion budgets.

Two likely winners — First Star's *Spy Vs. Spy*, based upon the long-running feature in *Mad Magazine*, and Activision's *Ghostbusters*.

What makes these games successful is that they are extremely fun to play. That doesn't seem like a major revelation, does it? Ha! Ever try to play Atari's *E.T.* or *Raiders of the Lost Ark*?

Spy Vs. Spy follows the lead set by the popular *B.C.'s Quest for Tires*. Both games take relatively simply cartoon line art that eat up a tiny amount of RAM. The characters you see on the screen actually resemble the one's you've seen in print.

TOP DESIGN

Ghostbusters is another matter. It is Activision's first entry into the world of media licenses, and they put David Crane — their top designer — on the project. Not too complicated but not offensively simple, *Ghostbusters* is better than the movie, in my humble opinion.

If ColecoVision survives the Wash-Out, it will be because of four highly-popular games: *Tarzan, Start Trek, Star Wars* and *War Games* — all successful licensed properties. Parents hate plopping $100.00 down on a game unit that gathers dust and they're hardly likely to throw down another $20.00 every time little Junior sees a fancy bit of software . . . unless Junior is playing the darn thing. So far, these licences have kept the ColecoVision in use.

Not all licenses are based upon media properties. For example, Atari licensed from Namco three of their very best-selling games — *Pac-Man, Dig Dug* and *Pole Position*. But when Jack Tramiel bought the company, these licenses *automatically* expired — I wonder if he knew that? — and the rights were snatched up by Data Soft.

ARCH-RIVAL

Tramiel's loss is Commodore's gain. As previously reported, when Tramiel bought up Atari, he ordered a halt to all production of Atarisoft games for the CBM64, which just happens to be Atari's arch-rival. Well, you'll never guess what Data Soft started manufacturing the minute they got the licenses to these three winners.

If you're keeping a running count, the latest score is Commodore 2, Atari 0.

Atari, by the way, claims to be continuing production on the 800XL despite massive price reductions. They are maintaining a full manufacturing schedule in the Asian and Irish plants, even though the selling price in the States is dropping to around $120.00.

Commodore is experiencing a few headaches. They're safe from this year's big Wash-Out, but the two new units haven't exactly set the world on fire, and sales of the CBM64 have dropped by about 10%. People simply want more power from their micros, and for new thrills they're looking to Apple and Tandy — and to IBM, if they're really dedicated to squeezing a lot of home business use out of their machine.

NOT MOVING

The lack of power is likely to do Coleco in. The ColecoVision unit is still well liked — a recent survey in *Boy's Life* magazine put the CV on top of the popularity chart with 40.8% (second place: the Atari 5200 with 38.8%) — but the Adam simply is not moving.

The first clear indication that Coleco might be giving up on the Adam came in early November when Coleco finally got out of their contract with a Japanese firm that made those noisy, tedious and basically offensive printers. Coleco has yet to replace the printer with one made by a different company, and without a printer, the Adam is useless.

It would be a shame if the Adam takes ColecoVision down with it. CV software is still strong when compared to that of other dedicated computers — it outsells all other formats except the Atari 2600, and there is more best-selling software out there for the CV than for any other unit except the aforementioned 2600.

If I were a betting man, I'd say Coleco will be out of the computer business by mid-1985 . . . if not sooner.

STATESIDE CHATTER

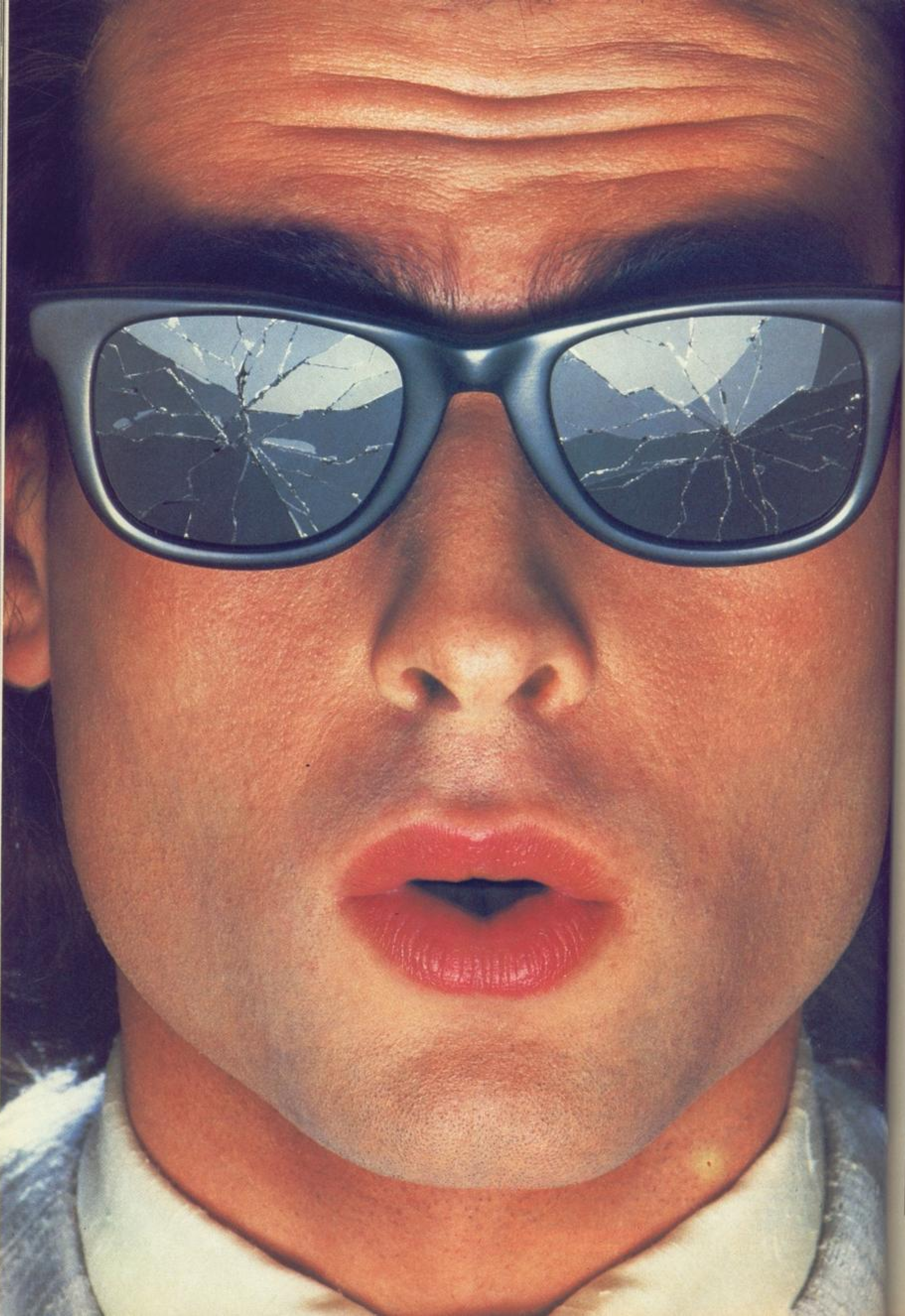
Among the healthy old-timers still selling strong are *Pitfall II* (and *Pitfall* for Coleco), *Q-Bert* and *Frogger*, and for general use micros, both *Flight Simulator* packages continue to be blockbusters.

Newcomers to the heights of popularity? Coleco's *Football* game is strong in the States (our football is a bit weird by U.K. standards, so if you latch on to this game, be prepared to step into a whole different culture) and Activision's *Ka-Boom* for the Atari 2600 and 5200.

And the best-sellers on the home computer front? The adventure games *Seven Cities of Gold* from Electronic Arts and Data Soft's *Bruce Lee*, the strategy games *Raid Over Moscow* from Access and *Archon II* from Electronic Arts, and the arcade adaptation *Beyond Castle Wolfenstein*, from Muse.

Archon II is the only game that is up there alongside such durables as the two *Flight Simulators, Exodus: Ultima II*, and *Wizardry*, all of whoom have been constant sellers for more than a year. But *Raid Over Moscow* looks like a winner — a well-received game that might take on heightened popularity with the re-election of President Reagan.

After all, there are all kinds of war games.



See Micronet 800 in action.

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Bristol. Boots, 59 Broadmead, Tel: 0272 293631.
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Bristol. Laskys, 16-20 Penn Street. Tel: 0272 20421.
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BERKSHIRE

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Slough. Laskys, 75 Queensmere Centre. Tel: 0753 78269.
Slough. MV Games, 245 High Street. Tel: 75 21594.

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Hyde. C Tech Computers, 184 Market Street. Tel: 061-366 8223.
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Macclesfield. Computer Centre, 68 Chestergate. Tel: 0625 618827.
Marple. Marple Computer Centre, 30-32 Market Street. Tel: 061-427 4328.
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Stockport. Stockport Micro Centre, 4-6 Brown Street. Tel: 061-477 0248.
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Wilmslow. Wilmslow Micro Centre, 62 Grove Street. Tel: 0625 530890.

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Workington. Technology Store, 12 Finkle Street. Tel: 0900 66972.

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Plymouth. Syntax, 76 Cornwall Street. Tel: 0752 28705.
Seaton. Curtis Computer Services, Seaton Computer Shop, 51c Harbour Road. Tel: 0297 22347.
Tiverton. Actron Microcomputers, 37 Bampton Street. Tel: 0884 252854.

DORSET

Bournemouth. Brook Computers, 370 Charminster Road. Tel: 0202 533054.
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Cheltenham. Screen Scene, 144 St Georges Road. Tel: 0242 528979.
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Sevenoaks. Ernest Fielder Computers, Dorset Street. Tel: 0732 456800.
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LANCASHIRE

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Burnley. IMO Business Systems, 39-43 Standish Street. Tel: 0282 54299.
Preston. 4Mat Computing, 67 Friargate. Tel: 0772 561952.
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Wigan. Wildings Computer Centre, 11 Mesnes Street. Tel: 0942 44382.

LEICESTERSHIRE

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Market Harborough. Harborough Home Computers, 7 Church Street. Tel: 0858 63056.

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Liverpool. Laskys, St Johns Precinct. Tel: 051-708 5871.
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Glasgow. Boots, 200 Sauchiehall Street. Tel: 041-332 1925.
Glasgow. Boots, Union Street and Argyle Street. Tel: 041-248 7387.

SHROPSHIRE

Telford. Telford Electronics, 38 Mall 4. Tel: 0952 504911.

STAFFORDSHIRE

Newcastle-under-Lyme. Computer Cabin, 24 The Parade, Silverdale. Tel: 0782 636911.
Stafford. Computerama, 59 Foregate Street. Tel: 0785 41899.
Stoke-on-Trent. Computerama 11 Market Square Arcade, Hanley. Tel: 0782 268524.

SUFFOLK

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Ipswich. Brainwave Micros, 24 Crown Street. Tel: 047 350965.

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Croydon. The Vision Store, 96-98 North End. Tel: 01-681 7539.
South Croydon. Concise Computer Consultants, 1 Carlton Road. Tel: 01-681 6842.
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Haslemere. Haslemere Computers, 17 Lower Street. Tel: 0428 54428.
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Woking. Harpers, 71-73 Commercial Way. Tel: 0486 225657.

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Cardiff. P & P Computers, 41 The Hayes. Tel: 0222 26666.
Swansea. Boots, 17 St Marys Arcade, The Quadrant Shopping Centre. Tel: 0792 43461.

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Coventry. JBC Micro Services, 200 Earlsdon Avenue, North Earlsdon. Tel: 0203 73813.
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Nuneaton. Micro City, 1a Queens Road. Tel: 0203 382049.
Rugby. OEM Computer Systems, 9-11 Regent Street. Tel: 0788 70522.

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Wolverhampton. Laskys, 2 Wulfrum Square. Tel: 0902 714568.

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Sheffield. Laskys, 58 Leopold Street. Tel: 0742 750971.
York. York Computer Centre, 7 Stonegate Arcade. Tel: 0904 641862.



GALACTIC MINE-FIELD



```
10 PRINT"♥":POKE53281,0:POKE53280,0
15 PRINT"▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒▒PLEASE WA
IT"
20 POKE52,48:POKE56,48:CLR:POKE56334,PEE
K(56334)AND254:POKE1,PEEK(1)AND251
30 FORT=0TO1211:POKET+12288,PEEK(T+53248
):NEXT
40 POKE1,PEEK(1)OR4:POKE56334,PEEK(56334
)OR1
50 FORT=0TO55:READA:POKE12288+512+T,A:NE
XT
60 DATA24,24,60,126,219,24,16,126
65 DATA126,60,24,219,126,60,24,24
70 DATA8,25,51,255,255,51,25,8
75 DATA16,152,204,255,255,204,152,16
80 DATA24,24,24,60,126,255,231,195
85 DATA195,102,60,255,255,60,102,195
90 DATA24,24,24,24,60,126,255,255
100 GOSUB7000:REM***TITLE***
110 PRINT"♥"
```

The joyous news flashes through on the FTL receiver. The war is over! Five years of life-or-death struggle against the Quargoids, and at last you can fly home in your scout-ship to the welcoming arms of Earth. There's only one problem — both sides have sown every quadrant between here and Terra with neutron mines. You have a scanner which shows you how many mines surround your current position, it just doesn't show you exactly where they are. You can run a quadrant scan, but it'll only give you a quick look. Can you get across the quadrant map to the hyperspace tumel (shown by the cross) without being vapourised? Don't forget to refuel at stars for extra points.

Controls: W: Up Z: Down A: Left Z; Right H: Quadrant scan

```
120 PRINT"ENTER SKILL LEV
EL 1-5"
130 PRINT"":INPUTSK
140 IFSK<1ORSK>5THEN130
150 POKE53272,28
160 GOSUB6000:REM***SET UP DISPLAY***
170 GOSUB5000
180 PRINT""
190 PRINT"*******END OF GAME****
***"
200 PRINT"YOURE SCORE WAS";SC
220 IFSC>HITHENHI=SC:PRINT"THE
 HIGH SCORE IS";HI
230 PRINT"ANOTE
R GAME Y/N?"
240 GETA$:IFA$<>"Y"THEN240
250 GOTO110
300 PRINT""
310 PRINT"HYPE
R-DRIVE"
320 FORT=0TO255:POKE53281,T:NEXT:POKE532
81,0:SK=SK+1:SC=SC+50
330 GOSUB6005
5000 POKEP,C:POKECO,1
5005 GETA$:IFA$=""THEN5035
5007 GOSUB5500
5010 IFA$="W"THENPOKEP,32:P=P-40:CO=CO-4
0:C=64:X1=X1-40:X2=X2-40
5015 IFA$="Z"THENPOKEP,32:P=P+40:CO=CO+4
0:C=65:X1=X1+40:X2=X2+40
5020 IFA$="A"THENPOKEP,32:P=P-1:CO=CO-1:
C=66:Y1=Y1-1:Y2=Y2-1
5025 IFA$="D"THENPOKEP,32:P=P+1:CO=CO+1:
C=67:Y1=Y1+1:Y2=Y2+1
5030 IFA$="H"ANDH=1THENPOKE53281,2:FORT=
1TO1700:NEXT:POKE53281,0:H=0
5035 GOSUB5200
5040 IFA$=""THENGOSUB5300
5045 IFPEEK(P)=68THENLV=LV-1:POKE53281,7
:FORT=1TO100:NEXT:POKE53281,0
5050 IFPEEK(P)=69THENSC=SC+15
5055 IFPEEK(P)=70ANDE<9THENE=E+1
5060 IFPEEK(P)=91THEN300
5065 IFLV<1THENRETURN
5070 PRINT"SCORE";SC;TAB(12)"SCANNER"
;SN;TAB(25)"ENERGY";E
5075 PRINT"LIVES";LV;TAB(20)"
LEVEL";SK
5080 IFX1>1984THENX1=1984:X2=2023
5085 IFX1<1144THENX1=1144:X2=1183
5090 IFY1<1984THENY1=1984:Y2=1183
5095 IFY1>2023THENY1=2023:Y2=1144
5100 IFP=X1-1THENP=P+1:CO=CO+1
5110 IFP=X2+1THENP=P-1:CO=CO-1
5120 IFP=Y1+40THENP=P-40:CO=CO-40
5130 IFP=Y2-40THENP=P+40:CO=CO+40
5135 GOTO5000
5200 REM***SCANNER***
5202 U=0:D=0:L=0:R=0
5205 IFPEEK(P-40)=68THENU=U+1:GOTO5215
5210 U=0
5215 IFPEEK(P+40)=68THEND=D+1:GOTO5225
5220 D=0
5225 IFPEEK(P-1)=68THENL=L+1:GOTO5235
5230 L=0
5235 IFPEEK(P+1)=68THENR=R+1:GOTO5245
5240 R=0
5245 SN=U+D+L+R
5250 RETURN
5300 REM***ZAPPER***
5305 IFE=0THENRETURN
5320 IFPEEK(P-40)=68THENPOKECO-40,7:FORT
=1TO200:NEXT:POKEP-40,32:SC=SC+5
5325 IFPEEK(P+40)=68THENPOKECO+40,7:FORT
=1TO200:NEXT:POKEP+40,32:SC=SC+5
5330 IFPEEK(P-1)=68THENPOKECO-1,7:FORT=1
TO200:NEXT:POKEP-1,32:SC=SC+5
5335 IFPEEK(P+1)=68THENPOKECO+1,7:FORT=1
TO200:NEXT:POKEP+1,32:SC=SC+5
5345 E=E-1:SN=0:RETURN
5500 REM***BEEP***
5510 POKE54296,15:POKE54276,17
5512 POKE54273,36:POKE54272,85:FORT=0TO3
:POKE54278,150:NEXT
5514 POKE54276,0:POKE54296,0
5516 RETURN
6000 SC=0:E=9:LV=3
6005 PRINT"":P=2004:C=64:CO=56276:SN=0:
X1=1984:X2=2023:Y1=2004:Y2=1164
6010 POKE53265,PEEK(53265)AND239
6015 FORT=55376TO55415:POKET,7:NEXT:H=1
6020 FORT=1104TO1143:POKET,82:NEXT
6025 FORT=0TOSK*50:A=FN R(N):POKE1144+A,
68:POKE55416+A,0:NEXT
6030 FORT=0TO15:A=FN R(N):POKE1144+A,69:
POKE55416+A,14:NEXT
6035 FORT=0TO9:A=FN R(N):POKE1144+A,70:P
OKE55416+A,8:NEXT
6040 A=INT(500*RND(1))+1:POKE1144+A,91:P
OKE55416+A,1
6045 POKEP,C:POKECO,1
6050 POKE53265,PEEK(53265)OR16
6055 RETURN
7000 PRINT"":HI=500
7005 PRINT" KEYBOARD CONTROLS
ONLY "
7010 PRINT"
 "
7015 PRINT"
7020 PRINT" .R.I.O.N. "
7025 PRINT" "
7030 PRINT" *  * "
7035 PRINT" * "
7040 PRINT" * *  * "
 "
7045 PRINT" PRESS SPACE
BAR "
7050 GETA$:IFA$<>" "THEN7050
7055 DEF FN R(N)=INT(880*RND(1))+1
7060 RETURN

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```

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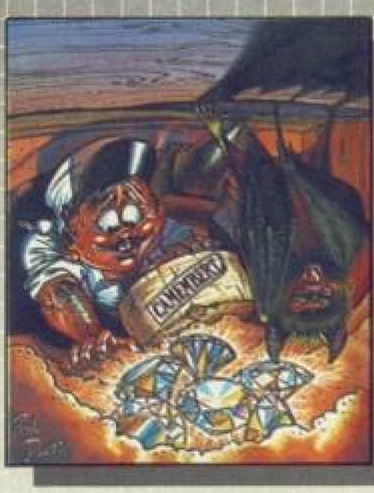
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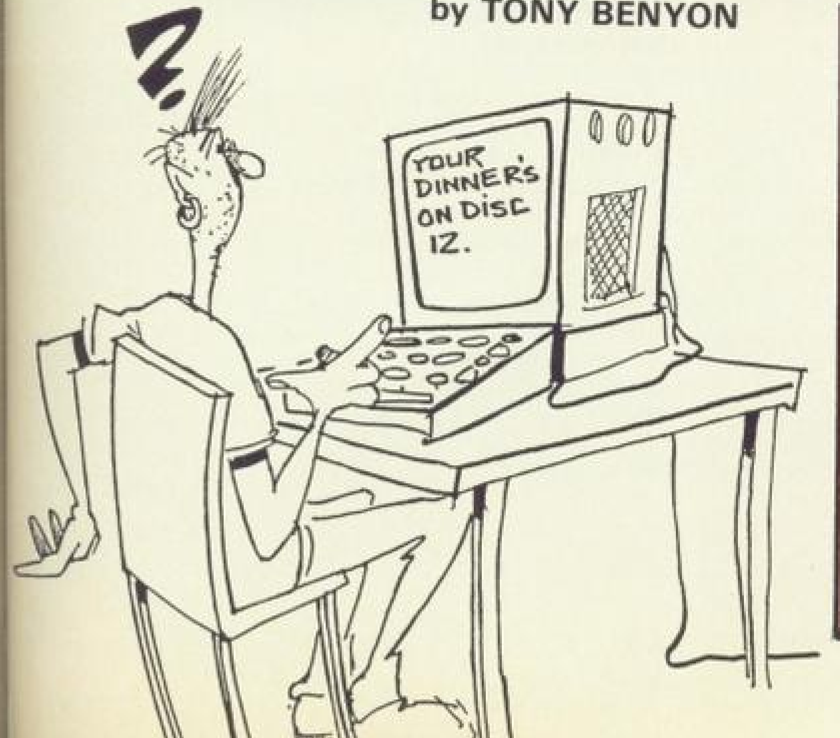
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KEY N = NEW ENTRY R = RE-ENTRY K = BIG K RAVE

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2	(—)		GHOSTBUSTERS (Activision)	Commodore 64	£10.00
3	(—)	K	KNIGHT LORE (Ultimate)	Spectrum	£9.95
4	(1)		DALEY THOMPSON'S DECATHLON (Ocean)	Spectrum/Commodore 64	£7.90
5	(16)	K	UNDERWORLDE (Ultimate)	Spectrum	£9.95
6	(2)		MONTY MOLE (Gremlin Graphics)	Spectrum/Commodore 64	£6.95/£7.95
7	(3)	K	EUREKA (Domark)	Spectrum/Commodore 64	£14.95
8	(11)		TORNADO LOW LEVEL (Vortex)	Spectrum/Commodore 64	£5.95
9	(—)	K	DOOMDARK'S REVENGE (Beyond)	Spectrum	£9.95
10	(10)		PYJAMARAMA (Microgen)	Spectrum/Commodore 64	£6.95/£7.95
11	(18)		ELITE (Acornsoft)	BBC/Electron	£14.95
12	(4)		BEACH HEAD (US Gold)	Spectrum/Commodore 64	£7.95/£9.95
13	(12)		COMBAT LYNX (Martech)	Spectrum/Commodore 64	£8.95
14	(—)		RAID OVER MOSCOW (US Gold)	Commodore 64	£9.95
15	(9)		AVALON (Hewson)	Spectrum	£7.95
16	(8)	K	JET SET WILLY (Software Projects)	Spectrum/Commodore 64	£5.95/£7.95
17	(5)		KOKOTINI WILF (Elite)	Spectrum/Commodore 64	£5.95/£6.95
18	(6)		FULL THROTTLE (MicroMega)	Spectrum	£6.95
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20	(19)		MATCH POINT (Psion)	Spectrum/Commodore 64	£7.95

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5	(2)	MONTY MOLE (Gremlin Graphics)	£7.95
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7	(3)	EUREKA (Domark)	£14.95
8	(—)	COMBAT LYNX (Martech)	£8.95
9	(—)	RAID OVER MOSCOW (US Gold)	£9.95
10	(6)	JET SET WILLY (Software Projects)	£7.95
11	(5)	BEACH HEAD (US Gold)	£9.95
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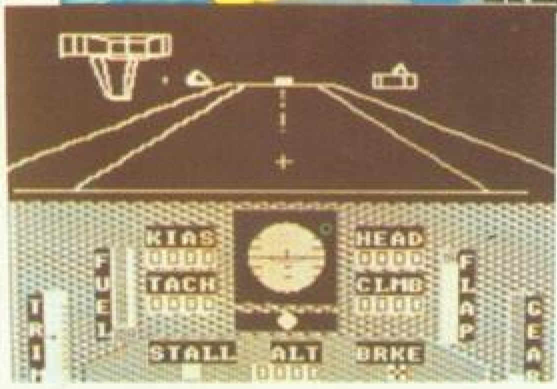
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